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THE ENGLISH PEOPLE OVERSEAS

VOLUME V

AUSTRALASIA

1688-1911

BY

A. WYATT TILBY



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

1916

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P R E F A C E

THE present volume, like its predecessors in this work, deals with the foundation of new English settlements by the old British stock. Like the settlements in Canada, but unlike those in the tropics, the colonies in Australia and New Zealand grew into new English nations; the history and circumstances attending that growth and national development, with its divergence from the parent people, are the subject of the following pages.

It has been a task of no little difficulty to rescue from old newspaper files, from mildewed forgotten pamphlets, and the tedious records of too often stupid travellers, the original materials on which the present book is largely based. Prolonged research has frequently revealed nothing but literary rubbish; but occasionally I have found the crudely expressed letters of old travellers quite extraordinarily illuminating in their revelation of the forces that were moulding the new English society in Australasia. The letter from an emigrant to New Zealand, for instance, which is quoted at the opening of Book XXII., throws considerable light on the social jealousy and class hatred which existed in England, and which largely accounted for the determination to make and keep Australia a democratic country among the free settlers of the middle nineteenth century. We know what the literate and governing classes thought about the illiterate and governed; we have little to show what the governed thought about their governors. The letter in question helps to supply the gap.

I may point out here that this volume helps to correct two misconceptions, the one the consequence of the other, which have arisen about Australia. It is sometimes suggested that the present inhabitants of the Commonwealth are mainly descended from the convicts of early years; and indignant Australians, hard pushed to answer an accusation which hurts their pride, have advanced the theory that the convicts were the victims of British laws. Both statements contain a little truth and much falsehood.

As a fact, the average convict transported to Australia a century ago was no more reputable a person than the average criminal to-day, and the evidence which is cited in the following pages leaves little room for the pleasing theory of his apologists—that he was more sinned against than sinning. The English criminal law of the period was always harsh, and occasionally barbarously severe; but it seems generally to have succeeded in laying the right persons by the heels, if their subsequent record in Australia goes for anything.

The other theory, that the Australians of to-day are mainly descended from convicted felons, also vanishes on investigation. I have examined, not without trepidation, the records of as many Australian families as have come in my way; the total making a not inconsiderable number, and including nearly all who have played a notable part in the exploration, industry, and politics of the antipodes. In no single case has the bar sinister of felony been found upon their origin—a fact which goes far to prove that the convicts had as little influence on the future of Australian society as the Pilgrim Fathers on the future of the United States; and that the present-day Australian is about as likely to be descended from the one as the modern American from the other.

A. WYATT TILBY.

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THE ENGLISH PEOPLE OVERSEAS

BOOK XVII

THE INVASION OF THE ANTIPODES:

1605-1821

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST ADVENTURERS: 1605-1712¹

WHEN Rome was still the one civilised state in Europe, there were already rumours among the learned of the existence of a great southern land, which some geographers even conjectured might perhaps be a vast island with an inland sea.² And during the long geographical night of the next thousand years some sapient doctor, more imaginative than the rest of the melancholy tribe

¹ In few departments of history are materials more scanty and less trustworthy. Thick mists of uncertainty overhang the earliest European voyages in the antipodes, and neither research nor controversy has dispelled the fog of geographic doubt. Hakluyt, Purchas, and the publications of the Hakluyt Society throw a little light on the discovery and discoverers of the South Seas; a kindred Dutch association, the *Linschoten Ver-eeniging*, is doing equally good work in the same field. Tasman's *Journal of his Discovery* was also published in Holland in 1898. Major's *Early Voyages to Australia* may be consulted with advantage; also Heeres, *The Part borne by the Dutch in the Discovery of Australia*. Kerr's *Collection of Voyages* is silent on this subject; the *Australian Book of Dates* gives as complete a list as possible of the earliest known voyages, but few details. Collingridge's *Discovery of Australia* is the best general work on the subject. Dampier's *Voyages* and other writings have been carefully edited by John Masefield.

² Pliny. The belief in that inland sea misled many a later explorer. See bk. xix. ch. i. It may have been some distorted rumour of the great lakes of Central Africa that misled the ancients.

that mouldered in the academic seclusion of a mediæval cloister, might perhaps mention, in those idler moments when his fellows ceased to dispute the number of angels that could dance on the head of a pin, the supposed existence of a continent in the unknown antipodes.¹

But such surmises were never more than speculation, and throughout the Middle Ages the Pillars of Hercules still remained the utmost boundaries of ascertained knowledge. The wisest philosopher and the most learned scholar knew less of distant lands than the ignorant viking who ventured forth on plundering or colonising expedition to Iceland, Greenland, or America;² but not the boldest viking ever tried to cross the torrid seas whose sultry breath parts Europe from Australia.

The island continent lies alone, the stately, solitary queen of an almost solitary ocean; a queen whose now dead or dying heart has burnt itself out in long ages of neglect and isolation, but nevertheless a queen that proudly hid her still living beauty from the first adventurers who sought her across half a world of tropic splendour.

The isolation of Australia from the rest of the world is strongly marked in her every feature. Her fauna and flora are different from those elsewhere; the evolution of the life she nourishes has followed other lines, the struggle for existence has been less severe than in lands easier of access, and more open for the immigration of hunted man and beast.

From her position on the globe Australia could not be discovered by the conquering white man until the way to

¹ Such speculations had all the charm of danger for the religious; for some theologians declared it impious to suppose that God would have created countries, and suffered them to remain unknown. But the idea persisted, in spite of the denunciation.

St. Augustin (*De Civitate Dei*, bk. ix. ch. xvi.) held the view that, even if land existed in the far south, and even if it were habitable, it could not be inhabited, since the Scriptures made no mention of it, and the descendants of Adam could not have crossed the immense ocean. But the holy Father's argument proved too much.

² Vol. i. bk. iii. ch. iv.

Africa, Asia, or South America was found; even then the mariner might well hesitate before he risked his frail cockle-shell across thousands of miles of stormy ocean that had no known end save the death that too often waits on daring.

Some fragments—they are nothing more—of the aboriginal history of the antipodes have been recovered; some traditions and conjectures of a crude barbaric drama played by primitive peoples in the southern seas have been restored; some legends of a remote or fabulous past survive;¹ but the first firm step in Australasian annals begins with the arrival of the first Europeans about the year 1605.

The First
Europeans
in Australia.

During the whole of the previous century, indeed, the old belief in the existence of a southern continent had steadily gained ground. Ever since the discovery of America and the opening of the long ocean-route to the Indies, Spanish and Portuguese adventurers had pushed onwards from Java and the spice-laden lands of the Malay Archipelago towards Papua and the neighbour isles. One by one they added gorgeous realms of fertile beauty to the charts, or perished by the way. And some of their number, of whom no record remains, possibly or even probably touched the shores of Australia knowingly or unawares;² some luckless mariners, driven by

¹ Professor Gregory records a tradition of the Australian aborigines that the deserts of central Australia were once fertile, well-watered plains; the heavens above mantled by a vault of cloud, so dense that it appeared a solid roof; the land covered with giant gum-trees, whose trunks formed pillars to support the sky; the air, now thick with saline dust, washed with soft cooling rains; the roof of the world inhabited by strange monsters whose bones now lie around Lake Eyre. But the clouds vanished, the rains ceased, the gum-trees died, and drought and desolation changed a happy garden into a wilderness, whose monsters perished and whose people fled.

See also bk. xx. ch. i., and bk. xxi. ch. iii. for some traditions of the Pacific islanders and the Maories.

² The early sixteenth-century belief in the existence of a southern continent was scarcely more than a belief; and although *Australis Terra* or *Jave la Grande* appears on some old maps (among others on that of Guillaume le Testu, a Provençal pilot, in 1542, and the Dauphin map, about 1536), we seem justified in disregarding such geographical guesses,

contrary winds, may have been wrecked there, and so died in miserable exile;¹ but the first explorers whom certainty admits to have started of set purpose to find the southern continent were Spanish.

The Spanish explorers de Quiros and de Torres sailed from

in the absence of any real evidence. The question has been investigated by E. Heawood, *Geographical Journal*, 1899; he is inclined to reject the authenticity of the early traditions. I have looked at several of the early maps, and confess myself entirely unimpressed by them.

On the other hand, the description of Australia by Wytfliet, a Dutch geographer at the close of the sixteenth century, is so definite that even the sceptic finds it difficult to dispose of as mere surmise. 'The Australis Terra,' says Wytfliet, 'is the most southern of all lands. It is separated from New Guinea by a narrow strait. Its shores are hitherto but little known, since, after one voyage and another, that route has been deserted, and seldom is the country visited, unless sailors are driven there by storms. The Australis Terra begins at two or three degrees from the Equator, and is maintained by some to be of so great an extent that, if it were thoroughly explored, it would be regarded as a fifth part of the world.' This account is surprisingly accurate; if it was not derived from the Malays, who regularly visited the coasts of Northern Australia (bk. xx. ch. ii.), possibly some European traveller of whom all other record has been lost, and who has thereby missed an otherwise certain immortality in the annals of discovery, gave it to Wytfliet, and the geographer forgot to mention the name of his informant.

It is curious that Wytfliet's mention of the strait dividing Australia from New Guinea—Torres Strait—was unknown to de Torres himself several years later, and it does not even appear on a French map of 1754.

¹ It is stated in a pamphlet published in 1911 at Sydney that a Spanish vessel was wrecked off Facing Island in 1600, the crew of which left some account of themselves, now almost obliterated by time, in a record cut on a rock on the shore. (See *Lope de Vega*, by L. Hargrave.) There is nothing improbable in this, but the author draws wider conclusions than the actual evidence he cites will warrant.

A claim to be the original discoverer of Australia has been made on behalf of a French mariner, Binot Paulmyer, Sieur de Gonneville, who was blown out of his course and driven by a storm on a large island, supposed to be Australia, in the year 1503. The claim is warmly supported by Favenc, *Australian Exploration*, who, however, fairly admits the difficulties in the way. There is not much real evidence to support the conclusion in Gonneville's own account of his voyage, which might equally well have been to an island in the Malay Archipelago. But certainty is of course impossible, and there is nothing very improbable in the story.

Other claims have been put forward: see *Le Descobridor Godinho de Eredia*, par Dr. Hamy, and both Magellan and Amerigo Vespucci have had their advocates.

the port of Callao in South America on 21st December 1605, at the head of an expedition whose errand was the discovery of the still unknown land. Steering to the south-west, and lighting soon after on an island of the New Hebrides group, it was named La Australia del Espiritu Santo ; perhaps de Quiros mistook it for the land he sought, as Columbus had mistaken a small West Indian island for a continent.

Spanish
Explorers
in Torres
Straits, 1606.

But the crew now mutinied, and part of the expedition was compelled to sail towards the Philippines ; de Torres, however, pushed on, and passed through the strait that bears his name, whence he may have seen the distant shores of Australia. But he achieved no more ; and the next explorer in the South Seas came from a rival nation.

In the same year, 1605, the Dutch vessel *Duyfken*¹ sailed from Java with the like hope of discovering a southern continent. The *Duyfken* reached the Gulf of Carpentaria and turned southwards ; but when some of the crew went ashore they were attacked by the natives and forced to return. The first white man who is definitely recorded to have touched Australian soil thus beat a hasty retreat from an unfriendly, if no longer altogether unknown land.

The Dutch
Explorers,
1605-42.

Ten years later Dirk Hartog, another Dutch seaman, reached Sharks Bay, in West Australia, and discovered the island that still bears his name. Another four years, and Van Edels sailed along the same coast, and from that time something like a regular series of Dutch voyages of exploration to Australia took place. In 1623 the north-west coast was visited ; the name of Arnhem Land, which was given to the district, perpetuates the memory of the next traveller's European home and antipodean journey. One Pieter Nuytz sailed along part of the western and southern shores in 1627 ;

¹ *Duyfken*=the little pigeon. Some writers have mistaken the word for Dolphin.

de Witt was on the north-west coast the following year, at the same time that Pieter Carpenter was exploring the Gulf, now called after him, of Carpentaria.

The Dutch traveller Pelsart, who was wrecked about this time on the west coast of Australia, brought the first authentic description of the country to Europe. His report was far from favourable; indeed, all the earlier accounts of the antipodes were directly at variance with the high expectations that had been formed of the unknown south in the northern world.

But so far little more was known than that a large island, or group of islands, existed to the south-east of the Dutch settlements in Java and Sumatra; it or they might be the southern continent, or merely a continuation of the East Indian Archipelago. They were certainly less attractive, and apparently less fertile and more uncivilised, than the lands already known.

The great voyage of Abel Jansen Tasman in 1642 hardly brought better news. He discovered the island of Tasmania, which he called by the name of Van Diemen's **New Holland.** Land; and sailing eastward, he landed on the shores of New Zealand, naming it Staaten Land, in honour of the States-General of Holland. Two years later he surveyed the north and north-west coasts of Australia; and the island continent, whose main outlines were now roughly marked upon the maps, was for long known in Europe by the name of New Holland, which Tasman had given it when taking nominal possession of the whole country for the Netherlands.

All but one of these early visitors to the antipodes had been Dutchmen. None, however, could see any opening for **Abandoned** trade in those bare inhospitable regions; and for **by Holland.** other than trading colonies Holland had no desire, even had the prospect been more enticing. Apparently satisfied with the knowledge gained, there were no further Dutch expeditions to Australia for over forty years. The exploration of the southern seas, indeed, was now prohibited by the

Dutch East India Company ; and Sir William Temple, the British ambassador at The Hague in the latter part of the seventeenth century, stated that that powerful corporation had ‘ long since forbidden under the greatest penalties any further attempts at discovering that continent, having already more trade than they could turn to account, and fearing some more populous nation of Europe might make great establishments of trade in some of these unknown regions, which might ruin or impair what they already had in the Indies.’

Such conduct was of a piece with Dutch commercial policy everywhere ; and the next visitor to Australia was an Englishman.

The first European discoveries in the South Seas had given no indication of the part that England was to play in the development of Australia. It is true that a project had England and Australia. been launched in the reign of Elizabeth for ‘ the discoverie, traffique, and enjoyenge for the Queen’s Majestie and her subjects of all or anie lands, islands, and countries southwards beyonde the Æquinoctial, or when the Pole Antartik hathe anie elevation above the Horison ’ ;¹ and in the year 1625 another project had been set on foot for the finding of the ‘ Terra Australis Incognita extending eastwards and westwards from ye Straits of Le Maire together with all ye adjacente Islands.’ But nothing came of these schemes ; and not until the year 1688 did the first Englishman set foot in Australia.

William Dampier, the hero of that voyage, was the son of a tenant-farmer near the placid country town of Yeovil, in Somerset. He had served in the Dampier’s Voyages, 1688 and 1699. mercantile marine and the Royal Navy, besides engaging in the more or less legitimate logwood trade in the West Indies, and doing a little buccaneer-

¹ See *Lansdowne MSS.*, printed in the Hakluyt Society’s edition of *Frobisher’s Voyages*. The original is dated 1573, and is endorsed by Lord Burleigh.

ing in those parts.¹ About the time that William of Holland was preparing to accept the throne of England, William Dampier was cruising off New Holland in the *Cygnet*; and after returning home and publishing an account of his discoveries he was again sent out in 1699 to make further discoveries. He now explored the coast from Sharks Bay to Dampier's Archipelago, and thence to Roebuck Bay, which takes its name from Dampier's ship. But his report was almost as discouraging as that of Pelsart had been. 'The land,' he wrote, 'was not very inviting, being but barren towards the sea, and affording me neither fresh water, nor any great store of other refreshments, nor so much as a fit place for careening.' In places, it is true, he saw plants which 'smelt very sweet and fragrant'; but the natives were hostile and 'the miserablest in the world'; and there were few animals, save 'beasts like hungry wolves, lean like so many skeletons, being nothing but skin and bones,' and a mysterious creature that jumped with its forelegs and resembled a racoon. It is not difficult to recognise the kangaroo from Dampier's short description.

Six years later, one Willan de Vlamingh, a Dutchman, was on the south-west coast; but he saw only the black swans of the district, and having given a name to the Black Swan River, he returned home again.

Again there was a long pause. Roggewein of Holland discovered the Thousand Isles; Carteret touched at New Britain and New Zealand in 1727; other stray travellers may have come and gone, of whom no record remains; but beyond these few, Australia was deserted until Captain Cook arrived in 1770.

The main reason that it was left in continual isolation was the uninviting aspect of its shores. Almost every European who had landed there had landed on arid stretches of the western or northern coasts; the more fertile eastern side of

¹ For the buccaneers, see vol. i. bk. ii. ch. vi.

the continent was undiscovered, and the south was scarcely better known, since it was still thought that Tasmania belonged to the mainland. And every sailor who had set foot in Australia had been repelled by the natives; every adventurer was quickly convinced that it would be futile to look for gold, or, indeed, for riches of any kind, in a country that seemed to offer its own inhabitants nothing but a few roots as a means of subsistence.¹

But, despite their failure, the romance of the Elizabethan age, that mingled love of adventure and riches which led men to risk their lives in America and the Indies, had touched also in later times the vast seas of the unknown south with something of its glamour. The first travellers may have returned home disappointed; but the spirit that animated them has left its mark on our literature.

The South
Seas in
English
Literature.

The mighty mind of Francis Bacon, perhaps with some strange prescience of a future English Commonwealth of the antipodes where statesmen would strive to build a better nation than the old under better social conditions, had pictured an ideal commonwealth of New Atlantis far to the south of Peru, in the direction where Australia was supposed to lie. In the same years Bishop Hall the satirist amused himself with sketching a fanciful description of the antipodes as another world that was yet the same, a land of Australia hitherto always unknown.²

¹ The English translator of de Brosse's French *Collection of Voyages to Australia* suggested that Britain should colonise the antipodes, but regretted that 'the coasts of New Holland are very difficult of access, and the parts that lie next the South Sea absolutely naked and barren. Carpentaria labours under the same disadvantage.' The book was published in 1766.

An earlier suggestion that Britain should colonise Australia was made in 1759 by the anonymous author of *Terra Australis*, who advised that the task should be undertaken either by the East India Company or the Africa Company, or, failing them, the South Sea Company. The suggestion was made to deaf ears.

² *Mundus Alter et Idem, sive Terra Australis antehac semper incognita* (1605). The map accompanying the volume is adorned with imaginary

And in the dramas and lighter works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the yet undiscovered countries are often alluded to, and always in the same sense, as expressing a remoteness almost infinite, and a wealth that could not be guessed at. 'Will your Grace command me any service to the world's end?' cries lighthearted Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing*. 'I will go on the slightest errand now to the antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a toothpicker from the furthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair of the great Cham's beard; do you an embassy to the pygmies.' Again, the love-lost Rosalind declares that 'one inch of delay is a South Sea of discovery'; and her superlative shows all future generations, who have not forgotten that luckless damsel's wanderings in the cause of love, the unbounded expectations entertained by men from those parts which they loosely denominated the antipodes.

As the world south of the Equator became better known geographical terms received a more definite meaning. But Congreve could still speak generally of the antipodes a century later, 'where the sun rises at midnight and sets at noonday'; another character in his *Way of the World* says: 'Your antipodes are a good rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows';¹ and two generations later, Lydia Languish, as undaunted at heart, if less heroic in costume than Rosalind, declares of her lover, 'Now I could fly with him to the antipodes.'

The long-faced *Spectator* has his word on the subject, when

islands such as Insula Hermaphroditica, Erotium vel Amantina, a coast called Aphrodisia, and a Terra Sancta ignota etiam adhuc—the latter rather a happy touch of episcopal wit.

Seventy years later, in Heylin's *Cosmographie*, Appendix (1677), the Falkland Islands and Utopia are both placed in the Terra Australis incognita—a curious blend of real and imaginary geography.

¹ The stockbroker in *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* cries on the Exchange, 'South Seas at seven-eighths, who buys South Sea bonds due at Michaelmas, 1718,' reflecting the speculation and bubble of Walpole's day. Fifty years later, 'Old South Sea annuities' are mentioned in the *Clandestine Marriage*.

a youth whose excessive vitality became troublesome to staidier folk at home wrote, 'Old Testy sends me up word that he has heard so much of my exploits, he intends immediately to order me to the South Sea.' The *Tatler*, too, has his humorous allusion to the boatswain in Dampier's ship; Robinson Crusoe was supposed to have found his desert island in that enchanted region; and the immortal Gulliver journeyed in the antipodes, identifying Van Diemen's Land with the abode of the Lilliputians.¹

In all this there is no mention of a settlement, and for the best of reasons. No settlement existed. Not until the nineteenth century could the novelist picture Wilkins Micawber, no longer 'waiting for something to turn up' in England, but prosperous and happy in Australia; or the poet of Tober-na-Vuolich sing of Elspeth and her husband emigrating to New Zealand.² The term South Seas, in fact, was so vague that it included the whole globe south of the Equator; the antipodes, which appealed so strongly as a figure of speech to English playwrights, was used equally loosely.

But the very mystery that hung over these remote and unfrequented parts served to make them the more alluring. For the bold, there was the prospect of another era of adventure, of moving accidents in flood and field; for the covetous, despite past failures, the possibility of a second El Dorado. And when adventure and gold unite to lead men on, their power is as great as that of women.

¹ The geography of Gulliver violates all the maps. Brobdingnag was supposed to lie in north-west America; Laputa and its dependencies are described as forming 'part of a continent which extends itself eastward to that unknown tract of America westward of California,'—a part that is still unknown, since it unfortunately does not exist.

² Readers of the *Water Babies* will also remember that one of the parents of little Tom Grimes was sent to Botany Bay; and Australia appears incidentally in *Pendennis*, in connection with Colonel Altamont, transported thither for forgery.

CHAPTER II

THE REDISCOVERY OF AUSTRALASIA : 1769-1802¹

AMONG the many fanciful suggestions of the *Guardian*, which that grave mentor delighted in laying before the frivolous breakfast-tables of the time of Queen Anne, was a remark that the foreign trade of England would never increase 'unless our merchants should endeavour to open a trade to Terra Australis incognita.' The experience of the South Sea Bubble a few years later made the nation very shy of any such enterprises ; and Australia remained neglected and practically forgotten for another half-century.

What was as yet known of the continent was indeed very little, and that little very bad. More than a century had passed since the Dutch had abandoned a land which was never more than nominally theirs. No Frenchman was certainly known to have set foot there. No Spaniard had been near Australia since Torres sailed through the straits that bear his name. The British flag had not been carried to the antipodes since the expedition under Dampier ; and no living Englishman had ever seen Australia.

But it was the southern seas, rather than the southern continent, that now attracted the attention of England ; and in the years immediately after the Peace of Paris, when the disputes with the American colonies first began to look serious, a few daring navigators forced their way into the Pacific, determined at length to wrest the last secrets of the

¹ There are full records of the voyages of Byron and Wallis. A whole literature has been written on Captain Cook and his officers ; his own *Journals*, however, are by far the best authority on himself. They may be supplemented by those of other members of the expeditions. Kitson's *Captain James Cook the Circumnavigator* is invaluable in clearing up many misconceptions of his career. The early colonial official papers, as mentioned in the next chapter, together with Collins's *Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, describe the subsequent explorations of Bass and Flinders.

greatest ocean from her mysterious bosom. It was these voyages that led directly to the rediscovery, and indirectly to the settlement, of Australasia by Britain.

On 21st June 1764, Commodore Byron of the Royal Navy left the Kentish Downs for the South Seas. After annexing the Falkland Isles in the name of His Majesty, and encountering what he supposed to be a race of giants in Patagonia,¹ he rounded Cape Horn, resolved 'to stand to the westward, till he should fall in with Solomon's Isles, if any such there were.'² These he failed to find; but he touched at one of the Society Isles, where, unable to land owing to lack of anchorage, and alarmed at the hostility of the natives, he named them Isles of Disappointment, and sailed away, regretting their useless beauty. Steering steadily to the north, he came nowhere near Australia, and returned to England in 1766.

*Voyages of
Byron and
Wallis,
1764-8.*

A second voyage in the Pacific by Captain Wallis brought more definite results. Leaving home on the same errand of discovery, he followed nearly the same course as Byron, but was fortunate enough to discover the delightful land of Tahiti, where he was able to go ashore and engage in traffic. The islands were lovely, the natives now proved friendly, and their women affectionate; indeed, so easy to arrange was commerce of all kinds with both sexes that the ship was in serious danger of being surreptitiously denuded of its nails and iron fittings, which were greatly coveted by the islanders, and liberally bestowed on them by the gallant sailors in return for the favours of love.

Returning to England in 1768, a glowing account by Wallis

¹ The gigantic stature of the Patagonians was reported by one traveller after another; but they gradually shrank as closer observations were made, until it was discovered that their height was little above the normal.

For the history of the Falkland Isles see vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv.

² These islands had been discovered by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, but the knowledge of them was suppressed as far as possible. See bk. xx. ch. i.

of his journey raised high expectations of the value of South Sea enterprise. But still none had visited Australia ; and the voyage which Lieutenant Cook was now commissioned to make had for its object the astronomical observation of the Transit of Venus from Tahiti, geographical exploration being for the moment a secondary consideration.

James Cook, a Yorkshireman of Scottish descent, to whose discoveries we owe the first real knowledge of Australasia, was born on 27th October 1728. His parents were in humble circumstances, and the lad's early years were spent in a two-roomed cottage of the kind known in the north of England as a clay biggin. Little is recorded of his youthful days ; but after a few years of such education as the place afforded he became an assistant in a haberdasher's shop at the village of Staithes, near Whitby in Yorkshire.

But the call of the sea was upon him, and young Cook entered the mercantile marine, subsequently enlisting in the Royal Navy. Employed on active service in the great campaigns which resulted in the conquest of Canada, he soon gave evidence of the possession of peculiar talents by the excellence of his surveys of the coasts of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Shortly afterwards came the opportunity of more important work.

Captain Wallis had reported strongly in favour of Tahiti being chosen as the best place for the astronomical observations which were contemplated at that time ; and Cook was now appointed to the command of the *Endeavour* barque, and ordered to proceed thither in charge of a scientific expedition. He sailed from Plymouth on 26th August 1768 ; the isles of the Pacific were reached, and the Transit of Venus was successfully watched the following year in the South Seas, to the accompaniment of continued good cheer among the friendly people of the Society Islands.

Captain
Cook,
1728-79.

His First
Voyage
round the
World,
1768-71.

Having carried out the primary object of the voyage, Cook now turned southwards, and sailed many days before discovering land on 8th October 1769.

The land he found proved to be an inlet on the east coast of the north island of New Zealand—the name of Poverty Bay being given it because nothing of which the ^{New Zealand,} expedition was in need could be obtained there ^{1769.} save a small supply of wood. But the surrounding country was not unattractive, and it was found to improve considerably on closer acquaintance. Cultivated land was met with in many places ; a sure sign, as Cook remarked, that the country was both fertile and well inhabited.

The two great islands of which New Zealand consists were both circumnavigated, in order to ascertain whether they formed part of the southern continent ; and while that question was being answered in the negative, it was discovered that the two differed greatly in their natural wealth and the character of their inhabitants.

In the north island the soil was light, but so fertile that it would bear all the products of Europe ; there was much good timber, and flax was abundant. Of the south island, on the other hand, it was reported that ‘ no country on earth can appear with a more rugged and barren aspect than this does from the sea, for as far inland as the eye can reach nothing is to be seen but the summits of rocky mountains, which seem to lay so near one another as not to admit any valleys between them.’

In some places the inhabitants, whom a later generation knew as the warlike Maories, were friendly and open in their bearing, and were found to possess the rudiments of civilisation ; in other parts they were absolute savages, poor and miserable, living without decency, hostile to and distrustful of all new-comers, and frequently indulging in sanguinary wars among themselves, which generally ended in an orgy of cannibalism. ‘ Their ideas,’ it was reported, ‘ were so

horrid and brutal, that they seemed to pride themselves on their cruelty and barbarity, and took a peculiar pleasure in showing how they killed their enemies.' They appeared, in fact, to have changed little since Tasman gave the name of Murderers' Bay to the spot at which he had anchored in 1642.

After a sojourn of nearly six months on the shores of New Zealand, Captain Cook sailed westwards for Australia on **Australia,** 31st March 1770; and four weeks later, on **1770.**

29th April, the *Endeavour* dropped anchor in an inlet which was named, from the abundance of its flowers and shrubs, Botany Bay. Here the aborigines seemed inclined to be hostile, although little intercourse was possible on this first visit; but while the native language was adjudged neither harsh nor inharmonious, and the people were considered well-made and active, it was easily seen that they were in a very rudimentary stage of development. And 'their skins were so uniformly covered with dirt that it was very difficult to ascertain their true colour; we made several attempts, by wetting our fingers and rubbing it, to remove the incrustations, but with very little effect.'

On a first appearance, and allowing for the fact that it was the middle of the dry season, the land appeared well watered; and also, as Cook admitted, the whole country was still virgin soil; but even at that, there was provender for more cattle all the year round than could ever be brought into New South Wales. And Cook believed that most kinds of grain, fruits, and roots would flourish, were they once planted and cultivated.

But taken as a whole, the prospect was not particularly inviting. Despite the fact that New South Wales, as Cook now called the entire continent, was believed to be larger than Europe, and that the coast was known to possess good harbours, and the neighbouring waters an inexhaustible supply of fish, the general estimate of the country was unfavourable.

It was stated to be 'upon the whole rather barren than fertile, yet the rising ground is chequered by woods and lawns, and the plains and valleys are in many places covered with herbage; the soil, however, is frequently sandy. The grass in general is high but thin. The soil in some parts seemed to be capable of improvement, but the far greater part is such as can admit of no cultivation.'

The expedition proceeded to coast Australia from the extreme south-east to Cape Tribulation, which owes its name to the disaster that now overtook the explorers; and Cook would probably have circumnavigated the whole continent had not the *Endeavour* struck upon the Great Barrier Reef at this point on 10th June. The accident, which threatened to bring the voyage to a disastrous close, forced Cook to return to England immediately; and after putting in at Batavia for repairs and provisions, he reached home again on 13th July 1771.

The reports of the voyage at once aroused enormous interest. The enthusiasm for discovery now increased; and a second expedition was quickly fitted out, which left England, again with Cook as commander, in the two vessels *Resolution* and *Adventure*, exactly a year after the *Endeavour* had returned.

Cook's
Second
Voyage,
1772-5.

The chief aim of this second voyage, however, was the exploration of the South Seas; once more Australia hardly came within its scope.

Cook penetrated far into the Antarctic, into such high latitudes that icicles more than an inch in length frequently hung to the faces of the crews; and when he eventually turned sharply to the north, he touched at many of the semi-tropical isles of the Pacific.

Australia was left altogether on one side, but the south island of New Zealand was again explored: Cook's second report, however, was not materially different from his first. 'The country,' he wrote, 'is exceedingly mountainous. A

prospect more rude and craggy is rarely to be met with; for inland appears nothing but the summits of mountains of a stupendous height, and consisting of rocks that are totally barren and naked, except where they are covered with snow. But the land bordering on the sea-coast and all the islands are thickly clothed with wood, almost down to the water's edge. The trees are of various kinds, such as are common to other parts of the country, and are fit for the shipwright, house-carpenter, cabinet-maker, and many other uses. Here are, as well as in all other parts of New Zealand, a great number of aromatic trees and shrubs, most of the myrtle kind; but amidst all this variety there were none that bore fruit fit to eat. . . . The soil is a deep black mould, evidently composed of decayed vegetables, and so loose that it sinks under you at every step.'

Although Captain Cook, in the report of his first voyage, had recommended that a settlement should be made either at the Bay of Islands or on the Thames River, his suggestion was disregarded. New Zealand was neglected for another half-century; but the accounts that were brought back in 1775 of the extraordinary beauty and fertility of the scattered groups of islands that lie like moles on the vast bosom of the Pacific Ocean caused considerable excitement among the adventurous and commercial, while the religious spirit of the age dreamed of fresh conversions in a new mission field.¹

A third voyage was projected a year after the second was ended. But once again Australia was neglected, Cook's **Cook's Third and Last Voyage, 1776-9.** object on this occasion being not so much a continuance of discovery in the South Seas as to ascertain whether a northern passage existed between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans—the old search for the North-West Passage, in short, which had baffled Davis, Hudson, and Baffin, was to be continued, but in a reverse direction.

¹ For the missions in the Pacific, see bk. xx. ch. i.

Cook left England on 12th July 1776—a date which his old crews had marked as a lucky day, as it was the anniversary of the departure of the previous expedition. His vessel, the *Resolution*, which was accompanied by the *Discovery*, arrived in Tasmania the following January; and having observed the wide difference between the mild and stupid aborigines of that island and the bloodthirsty Maories, he proceeded to New Zealand, and onwards to the Pacific. He explored the great west coast of North America, which two generations of French and English traders had striven in vain to reach by the overland route from eastern Canada;¹ he sailed through the Behring Straits into the bleak solitudes of the Arctic Ocean. Baffled by ice and snow, he was forced to turn back to warmer latitudes; but death awaited him in the tropics. At Hawaii, on 14th February 1779, Captain James Cook the circumnavigator was slain by accident in a brawl with some of the natives of the island.

The great sailor was little more than fifty when he died; but in that short lifetime, and within the limits of ten years' travel, he had opened up the Pacific Ocean to British enterprise. What had hitherto been thought a waste of waters—for the Spaniards and Portuguese who traversed the vast expanse of the Pacific had suffered few of its secrets to be divulged—was now known to be studded with rich and fertile groups of islands, to contain a great continent in Australia, and two considerable countries in New Zealand; and not many years were allowed to pass before these discoveries were turned to profitable account.²

A few years after Cook met his tragic death the first British

¹ See vol. iii. bk. x. ch. iii. Alexander Mackenzie crossed the American continent a few years later.

² History repeats itself. When America first became known to Europe, the small West Indian islets were perhaps unduly prized, while the continent itself was less esteemed. Much the same mistake was committed in Australasia; for it was the fortune of New Zealand and Australia to be depreciated, while the Pacific Isles were better known and more highly valued. The small is more readily appreciated than the great.

colony in Australia was founded at Port Jackson. But for some time subsequently there was little exploration of the **Further** interior ; nor could there, indeed, be any great **Exploration.** attraction in such work at that day. For this pioneer settlement in the antipodes was formed mainly of criminals ; its prosperity in early days was always precarious, and frequently its very existence hung by a thread. It was planted on the edge of the ocean ; inland was a wild and apparently unprofitable country, where those few who ventured to enter generally died miserably, either of starvation or at the hand of the aborigines. So little did the exploration of Australia advance, in fact, that some years later it was considered a feat worthy of record when the governor of the colony rode thirty miles from the coast ; anything further than this was stopped by the Blue Mountains, whose ranges separated the establishment at Sydney from the unknown wilderness of the interior.

Another generation was to come and go before long-distance overland journeys could be attempted in Australia ; **Bass and** for the present it was by sea alone that exploration **Flinders,** was possible. Along the coasts, however, some **1798-9.** useful knowledge was gathered by Bass and Flinders, a surgeon and lieutenant stationed at Port Jackson. Sailing to the south in an open boat in the year 1798, they surmised from what they saw that Tasmania was an island, or rather a group of islands, and not part of the continent, as had heretofore been supposed. Another journey in the following year decided the question. They passed through what is now known as Bass Strait without realising exactly where they were ; only the long swell of the southern ocean convinced them that their supposition regarding Tasmania was correct. They succeeded in circumnavigating the island ; and after touching at various places on the coast of the country which now forms the state of Victoria, and visiting some of the smaller islands that lay along their course, they

returned to Sydney; but their report, on the whole, was disappointing.

It is true that the land they saw near Port Dalrymple was evidently fertile. 'If it should ever be proposed to make a settlement here,' they wrote, 'this part seems to merit very particular attention.' In places the hills were 'grassed and wooded close down to the waterside'; elsewhere the explorers were astounded by the varied and magnificent scenery, and attracted by the docility of the natives. But in most places the soil was stony, or else wet and salt. In either case it was scarcely fit for pasturage. In the Twofold Bay district it was 'much more barren than productive,' and the same seemed true of the greater part of the country which they explored. Most of the islets they visited were also wild and deserted, showing nothing but brown and starved vegetation.

Their discouraging Report.

The final conclusion of Bass and Flinders was that both New South Wales and Tasmania were poor countries. In the former, the soil that was fit for culture was supposed to consist only of a few distinct patches of limited extent, and of varying quality; in Tasmania good soil was more equally distributed, and therefore spots of abundant richness were less frequently seen. In both countries it was at once noticed as a grave difficulty that the water supply was deficient.¹

In the same year, 1799, the coast to the north of Sydney was explored, but nothing was added to what Cook had already discovered, nor did Bass and Flinders reach so far as he had done.

The real exploration of Australia was still to come; but the accounts given by the early travellers, who saw only the superficial aspect of the land, cannot fail to suggest some singular reflections.

There seemed nothing inviting in the whole continent.

¹ It must have been an unusually dry season, for Tasmania is generally well watered.

Almost without exception the reports regarding Australia had been depressing; almost without exception the reports that were given for years to come by every traveller who visited the antipodes were equally pessimistic. Even Darwin, who had keen eyes both for natural beauty and for natural possibilities, had few good words to say for the country, and no great belief in its future, when he visited it forty years later. For a long time little attention was given to Australia in Britain; not until the discovery of gold in 1851 did the English colonies there emerge from obscurity.¹

The quiet beauty of Australia was not of a kind to appeal to men who had seen the prodigal luxuriance of Nature in the South American tropics, or the pearl-like splendour of the Pacific Isles; rather did the peaceful monotony of its landscapes repel them. The aborigines had done nothing to cultivate the land; everywhere was virgin bush or untamed desert. Its distance from home, and its supposed disadvantages as compared with the United States, prevented many emigrants from coming who would otherwise have settled in the antipodes. And various artificial methods had to be resorted to before cultivation was possible in many parts that only needed irrigation to blossom abundantly. The tardiness of Nature, and the many difficulties that had to be faced before profitable agriculture was possible, compelled co-operation on a larger scale than had been tried elsewhere. Thus, from the exigencies of its natural conditions, were laid

¹ Sir Joseph Banks, the naturalist and President of the Royal Society, who accompanied Cook on his first voyage, had a better opinion of Australia, and considerable influence in inducing the British Government to found a settlement there. But even his first impression was not too favourable. And Darwin, in the *Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle* (1836), after some expressions of moderate approval, confessed that he left Australia 'without sorrow or regret,' and remarked that 'nothing but rather sharp necessity' would make him live there. He admitted that the continent might some day 'reign a great princess in the South,' but he thought 'such future grandeur rather problematical.'

For the discovery of gold, see bk. xviii. ch. iv.

the foundations of the social policy that has since been so conspicuously identified with Australasia.

And certain peculiar but not regrettable features have characterised the subsequent development of the new nation whose seeds Britain now began to scatter carelessly through the southern seas.

There have been few dramatic episodes in Australian history. It is one of the few considerable countries in the world that has never known invasion by a foreign power. It has experienced no civil war. It has become involved in no international complications of any magnitude. It has seen but little bloodshed. And in spite of enormous improvements in modern means of locomotion and transit, it is in many respects still isolated.

It has afforded a footing to no European people save the English ; it has been the home of no non-European people save its own aborigines at all. It has stood apart from the world's disputes ; its whole development has been peaceful, and it is in this that the main interest of its history lies. It is true that the slur of crime was cast upon the continent in its earlier years ; but apart from this, the British have begun and continued unhampered in Australia. The protecting wings of the great empire have been over the colonists in the antipodes, leaving them free to concentrate attention on their own affairs ; and in consequence they have evolved a civilisation, original and distinctive in some respects, marvellously successful in a material sense when the short term of its existence is considered, and perhaps not less fertile in a spiritual sense when we remember the high ideals that animate Australia and New Zealand at the beginning of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER III

THE PENAL STATIONS: 1788-1802¹

As Captain Cook sailed from place to place on his voyages of discovery in the southern seas, he claimed each spot at which he touched for Britain. In consequence, practically the whole of Australasia came into the nominal possession of England; ² and lands whose very size and shape were still unknown, whose products and fertility could hardly be estimated, whose languages and peoples could not be enumerated, were henceforth considered to be subject to George III. That monarch had lately lost one empire in America by his own act; he now gained another in Australia by the acts of his lieutenants.

The curious ethical conceptions of right which underlay

¹ There are many histories of early Australia. Auckland's *History of New Holland* (1787) deals with precolonisation times. Paterson's *History of New South Wales* may be consulted, as also Mudie's *Picture of Australia*, and Lycett's *Views in Australia*. For early days the *Voyage of Governor Phillip* (1790), White's *Journal of a Voyage* (1790), and Tench's valuable *Narrative of the Expedition* (1789); also Hunter's *Historical Journal of Transactions at Port Jackson* (1793), and Marsden's *Present State of New South Wales*. The various *Voyages and Narratives* published under the name of Barrington are not original.

The best and fullest accounts of the whole period are Bonwick's *First Twenty Years of Australia*, and Collins's *Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*. The former is founded on the official records of the Colonial Office, but the author is not always impartial; the writer of the latter was one of the prominent officials in the first settlement.

There are several pamphlets relating to old Botany Bay in the British Museum, mostly of the 'last confession of a doomed criminal' order. They are of little value, but of some interest as the only apparent survivors of a species of literature which must have been fairly common at the time.

² The designation New Holland remained on the maps and in popular currency for several years. In the charts accompanying Oxley's *Journals* (1820) the western half of Australia is called New Holland, and the eastern half New South Wales.

The name New South Wales was given by Captain Cook; the same name had been given, rather inappropriately, by an older explorer to the west coast of Hudson Bay (vol. iii. bk. x. ch. i.), but long since forgotten.

these claims to land that was already partially occupied, and therefore necessarily to some extent owned, by others, might perhaps have caused a transient feeling of amazement in a different planet, whose inhabitants were not subtle enough to disguise the happy belief that desire is a justification of possession under the spreading mantle of international law ; but the practice was too common to excite much remark in the civilised countries of Europe.

Yet in a logical world which regards the fact rather than the theory, the undeniable might rather than the problematical right, it must be admitted that however valid the claim, effective colonisation, not discovery, is the only real test of possession ; and as yet there were no English colonies in Australasia. The first British station in those parts was not founded until 1788, and the early years of settlement gave little promise of the Commonwealth of the next century.

The first use that was made of the new British possessions was as a penal station for convicted criminals. The scum of England was transported to the antipodes, along with the victims of the barbarously severe judicial code of the day ; and there both were set down in bondage and exile, the unfortunate rendered desperate by the wrong that had been done them, the bad corrupt to the last degree—a miserable inauguration of a new English nation.

In palliation of the Imperial Government's action may fairly be urged the extreme ignorance which still prevailed as to the resources, and even the extent, of Australia ; and not only that, but the reports which had been received regarding the new dependency of the Crown were none too laudatory. In striking contrast to the rhapsodies that had been indulged in when Virginia was discovered,¹ the verdict of almost every visitor to the antipodes was pessimistic. Pelsart and Dampier had both given a bad account of Australia. Cook was less depressing, but he had reserved all his enthusiasm for the

¹ See vol. i. bk. i. ch. vi.

beautiful islands of the Pacific. None of the explorers in the southern seas thought highly enough of the new continent to rank it as a second America, as compensation in part for the secession of the United States.¹

Australia had hidden her face from those who found her ; for some years more she hid her face from those who misjudged her.

But meanwhile the position in England was urgent and full of menace. The prisons were full to overflowing.

Crime in England. Prisoners of all classes and both sexes were herded together indiscriminately ; no distinction was drawn between the hardened offender and the youthful unfortunate, and both in time became equally bad. John Howard, the father of prison reform in England, and John Wesley, the apostle of the eighteenth century, had, indeed, already called attention to this evil state of things, and had formulated proposals for betterment.² But the reform had not been thoroughly carried out in the short time that had elapsed since their investigation ; and though the age was big with schemes for revising the drastic criminal code, no definite steps had yet been taken to alter the harsh legal system of Britain.

¹ It might also have been urged in defence of the Imperial Government's action that the criminals stood a better chance of reformation in a new land. But this idea had been refuted by past experience. See vol. i. bk. i. ch. vi. and bk. iv. ch. v.

Bacon had long since pointed out that 'it is a shameful and unblessed thing to take the scum of people, and wicked condemned men, to be the people with whom you plant ; and not only so, but it spoileth the plantation ; for they will ever live like rogues, and not fall to work, but be lazy, and do mischief, and spend victuals, and be quickly weary, and then certify over to their country, to the discredit of the plantation.' But statesmen do not always study philosophy, which in this case was a true prophecy.

The transportation of convicts is one of those apparently convenient short cuts which, in politics as on other equally dusty highways, proverbially prove the longest way round.

² John Wesley admitted that Newgate Prison in London had recently been improved, but stated that other prisons were still in a disgraceful condition in 1761 ; only in Newgate were the sexes separated. See Wesley's *Journal*.

And still the prisons remained full, and the Government could not indefinitely continue the building of new ones. And since the revolt of the old American colonies it was no longer possible to get rid of the convicts by the quick and easy method of sending them to work in the plantations. An attempt was indeed made to find a suitable place for a penal and reformatory colony in Africa, but none offered for the dubious honour. And ever the problem of accommodation pressed more and more urgently; and Australia was now mentioned as a convenient station for transportation.

The Imperial Government soon determined to try the experiment;¹ and on 13th May 1787 Captain Arthur Phillip sailed from England for Botany Bay with six transports and three storeships, taking with him 565 male and 192 female convicts, together with 18 children. The prisoners were stated to be humble and submissive in their demeanour, and the voyage was without incident, save for the attempted escape and easy recapture of a convict at Teneriffe.

The Penal
Station at
Botany Bay,
1788.

The human cargo arrived without mishap at its destination on 20th January 1788; and six days later, after Botany Bay had proved unsuitable for colonisation, the first British settlement in Australia was founded higher up the coast at Port Jackson.

The story of that settlement is not a savoury one. The men were blackguards and the women prostitutes. Phillip

¹ There were strong protests against the establishment of a convict settlement in Australia; see, for example, *A Serious Admonition to the Public on the Intended Thief Colony at Botany Bay* (1786). John Howard himself condemned the Botany Bay scheme as 'expensive, dangerous, and destructive.' These remonstrances, however, were no more effectual than the suggestion in *A Proposal for Establishing a Settlement in New South Wales*, that Australia would 'afford an asylum to those unfortunate American loyalists to whom Britain is bound by every tie of honour and gratitude.' But most of the United Empire loyalists were already settling in Ontario and Maritime Canada, countries which they would certainly prefer to the remote distances and evil reports of Australia. See vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. v.

himself said of the latter that 'in general they possessed neither virtue nor beauty,' and he proposed to allow the men promiscuous intercourse with the more abandoned.¹ The less disreputable among them, he thought, might intermarry with the better class of convicts, or wives might be found for the latter among the native women. And from these debased and promiscuous ingredients was to spring the first generation of British Australasians; the garrotter and the forger, the diseased harlot of the London streets and the aboriginal 'gin' of the bush were to be the first parents of an imperial state.

At first sight New South Wales seemed a fitting station for the involuntary colonists. One of the officials wrote that 'in the whole world there is not a worse country.' Another did not believe that anything could be profitably grown in any shorter time than a century, and said it would be 'cheaper to feed convicts on turtle and venison at the Tower of London than to be at the expense of sending them here.' It is curious to reflect that these words were spoken of a spot which is now the centre of the wealth and splendour of modern Sydney;² but the first few years of the colony did not belie them.

Immediately on landing some of the men were lost in the dense backwoods. Scurvy broke out, and many deaths took place. The wilder convicts, impatient even of the gentle discipline that was at first enforced, wandered away and were lost. Those who returned were punished, but nothing could prevent further desertions. Within three weeks of landing a court of criminal judicature had to be established, and later a force of night-watchmen was instituted. Executions and floggings were frequent. Gross licentiousness prevailed; and

¹ Tench remarked (*Narrative of the Expedition*) that to 'prevent the intercourse was impossible; to palliate its evils only remained.' The Government was not very successful even in that, and some of the officials were found to have taken female convicts for their mistresses.

² The name Sydney was derived from Viscount Sydney, the Secretary of State in the Imperial Government, who was mainly responsible for the foundation of the settlement.

while petty thefts were continual, the men found an easy way of hiding their gains in the huts of their paramours.

The inevitable discovery of a gold mine was proclaimed ; and it was not until a convict had been flogged into confessing that he had fashioned the nugget he exhibited out of a guinea or a ring and a buckle that his tale was disproved. Even then many thought he was keeping his knowledge secret till a better opportunity offered.

The indifferent or friendly attitude of the natives soon changed into one of hostility. A ridiculous conspiracy was set on foot that was planned to end in a general mutiny, and an expedition by the convicts to Tahiti. Greater severity was introduced from this time, but with little effect.

Others, with pitiable ignorance, thought they could walk overland to China, and started out with that end in view. A great plot was discovered among the Irish rebels who had been transported ; they believed that another white colony existed some three hundred miles to the south, where they would be free to live in idleness. Not until the Governor allowed five of them to go on an exploring expedition was the baselessness of the story demonstrated ; they returned worn out and footsore, after undergoing terrible hardships in the trackless bush.

Small material advance was made, for nothing could overcome the idleness and lassitude of the men. Those employed on public works, at constructing a wharf or building the first clay or grass-roofed huts, did no more than was necessary to save their backs from the whip. Those engaged in agriculture either could not or would not dig. There was not, as indeed there could not be, among such a crew of ruffians, any idea of making common cause in establishing a self-supporting community.

Their Laziness, Insubordination, and Misery.

It is not surprising that famine was soon added to the other troubles of the settlement. Great hopes had been entertained of an abundant supply of sea-fish, but these proved delusive.

The plants and animals that had been brought over from Europe and South Africa died. The crops would not mature. Additional supplies occasionally came in from Cape Colony, but not enough to restock the storehouses.

The whole colony was frequently on half rations. The military guard was often on the verge of revolt. Of the marines at the station it was said that 'not one of them had a shoe to their feet, nor scarce a shirt to their backs, nor a pot to every twelve men, nor a bed nor a blanket among them.'

Meanwhile the British Government was sending out further batches of criminals every few months, and thus placing more **The Trans-** burdens on the Governor of New South Wales, **port Ships.** when he could barely provide for those he had already. By 1795 the number of those transported had reached 4937, and it was increasing every year. But the prisoners often died on board, owing to the overcrowding and lack of cleanliness which made a convict ship very like a slaver. Governor Phillip wrote in 1790 that 'of 939 males sent out, 281 had died on board, and 50 since landing'; while those who survived were 'emaciated and worn by long confinement or want of food.'

A few years later the conditions were improved, owing to the exertions of the philanthropic Mrs. Fry and her devoted band of followers, who personally inspected each vessel before it sailed from England; but from one point of view it was a blessing that so many perished, for an official in Australia wrote that, 'had not such numbers died on the voyage and since the landing we should not at this moment have had anything to receive from the public stores.'

The fresh convicts who arrived were in a miserable state; 'a great number of them lying, some half and others nearly quite naked, without either bed or bedding'; as late as 1798 a complaint was sent to England that 'the whole colony was actually naked, no clothing worth mentioning has been

received here for more than two years. Not a blanket to wrap themselves in during the night.' Insubordination and crime now increased among the prisoners, and the men professed themselves too weak to work ; but it was noticed that ' the distress of the colony did not seem to make any amendment in the morals of the convicts.'

From beginning to end the whole system was vicious and immoral. As soon as a convict vessel left England, the ship's officers selected the most passable among the women prisoners, and lived with them during the voyage ; the less attractive were taken by the sailors. On landing in Australia, a similar process was gone through ; the Government officials took their pick, the remainder were distributed among the male convicts according to choice. Often a prisoner would claim as his wife a strange woman immediately on her arrival, and if she did not disown him the pair lived together as long as both were agreeable to the arrangement.

Viciousness
of the
System.

At first marriage was not thought of in New South Wales ; even in 1807, after twenty years of the penal system, the Governor reported that ' the married women were 395, concubines 1035, legitimate children 807, natural children 1025.'

Immorality
and
Drunken-
ness.

Drunkenness was the common curse of the place. Thieving became so general that it was hardly noticed ; the death penalty was no deterrent. Riots and disturbances were frequent, while there were constant desertions from the settlement ; men wandered off into the backwoods, and were lost or killed by the natives.

From these hopeless elements it was the task of the Governor to rear a self-respecting community. No provision had been made for schools, and but little for religious teaching ; yet there were children in this terrible settlement. It is to the credit of the officials that they saw in them the hope of the future. The chaplain

The Children
of the
Colony.

of the colony interested William Wilberforce in the instruction of the convicts' offspring; a long correspondence was exchanged between the two; and by 1792 the rudiments of education were introduced. This, however, was not enough; the children were visibly degenerating through association with their own parents; and to prevent the spread of corruption an orphan school was opened. 'It was the only step,' wrote the Governor, 'that would ensure some change in the manners of the next generation. God knows this is bad enough.'

But no funds were forthcoming from home to carry on the good work. Since England did not yet recognise the right of her own children at home to instruction, it is not to be wondered at that she made no provision for the unfortunates of her most distant possession. The Governor, however, was equal to the occasion. Orders were issued in the year 1800 to raise funds from 'such donations as may be received, and a regulation duty on the entrance and clearance of vessels, landing articles for sale, privilege of watering at a convenient place for shipping, and issuing blank forms of promissary notes.' By this means were rescued those 'deserted female orphans from those scenes of prostitution and iniquity that disgrace the major part of the inhabitants of this colony'; and such were the feeble beginnings, in the twelfth year of the British occupation of New South Wales, of the educational system which has since developed into so efficient an institution in Australia.

But it was of necessity a long time before the ameliorating influence could be felt in any marked degree; and meanwhile there were other difficulties of more urgent character. The arrival of supplies from England was always precarious, and it was therefore the natural policy of the administration to encourage land settlement, agriculture, and stock-breeding.

The whole of the original imported resources of the colony had consisted of seeds which, when sown, would not come up,

on account of the ignorance of agricultural methods shown by the convicts ; and in live stock the place possessed but one bull, four cows, one calf, one stallion, three mares, **Agricultural Resources.** three foals, twenty-nine sheep, twelve pigs, and a few goats. These latter were carefully tended, but some escaped to the backwoods, where they were found in 1795 in a pleasant and fertile inland country.

Their increase demonstrated the natural fitness of Australia for cattle-raising ; but the scarcity of corn remained a serious difficulty. The convicts were too indolent to do more than they were compelled ; while those whose sentences had expired, and who started operations on their own account, were generally more troublesome than before. The unsatisfactory condition of a colony founded on time-expired soldiers, sailors, and prisoners became every day more apparent ; and the officials sent home an appeal for a more respectable class of emigrants. The convicts, it was proposed, should then be placed out among the free settlers as indentured labourers ;¹ it was urged that a better social tone would thereby be given to the colony, while those who had come out of their own free will would have an interest in the country which no prisoner could pretend to possess while he was still pining for his old haunts of crime.

The appeal was not neglected. Applications had indeed already been received by the British Government from people in England who desired to settle in Australia, **The First Free Settlers, 1792.** but who could not go, partly on account of lack of funds, and partly because permission was as yet withheld. The Government seems to have thought it extraordinary that anybody should wish to go to so unattractive a place as New South Wales ; and some of the applications

¹ This remained indeed a favourite scheme for many years in other colonies. It was suggested that convicts should be transported to Cape Colony to take the place of the South African slaves emancipated in 1834 (vol. vi. bk. xxiii. ch. iv.), but neither Dutch nor English would hear of the idea.

that arrived in London were from men who evidently had no chance of success in Australia. One pressed his claim because he was an accountant, one because he spoke excellent French, and one gave the more relevant reason that he was in love.

But these apart, there were still some who were eligible ; and the regulations that were drawn up in consequence were framed in no ungenerous spirit to the future settlers. To the marines on duty at Port Jackson allotments of eighty acres were offered to single men, and one hundred to married ; to non-commissioned officers, one hundred and thirty acres to single men, and one hundred and fifty to married. In addition, ten acres were allotted for each child. They were supplied with free clothes, tools, and seeds, and a year's provisions ; the land was free for five years, and afterwards subject to a rent of a shilling for every fifty acres. In this way was formed the first New South Wales military corps, for these privileges were conditional on service ; to the emigrants from England a free passage was granted, with tools, land, and the service of convicts free, together with provisions for two years.

Some took advantage of the grant, and the Governor found his policy quickly justified. The criminal slur that was thrown on Australia was indeed removed very slowly. A colony that has been reserved for convict settlements is no very inviting place for the homes of honest free men. The prejudice which looked on the antipodes as the land of outcasts died very gradually ; and as the Imperial Government insisted on its right to transport criminals to various parts of the country well into the middle of the nineteenth century, it is scarcely wonderful that people with indifferent geographical knowledge did not distinguish very accurately between penal stations and free pioneering settlements. The same stigma of crime was cast over the whole.

But the arrival of free colonists was nevertheless the

turning point of Australian history. Within a year there was a noticeable difference in the harvests ; the live stock of the country increased ; the first squatters **Their Success.** took up land.

From this time, in fact, there were two distinct elements in New South Wales. On the one hand, there were the convicts, without volition or energy, hating and hated by the free settlers, in some respects a danger to the colony, in some perhaps an advantage, since their labour, of little value though it might be, was unpaid. On the other hand, there were the free colonists, men ready to build their homes in Australia, and detesting the action of the British Government in making a prison of the country. They recognised, it is true, the advantage they obtained by the forced work of the convicts, but none the less they hated it ; and the more prosperous they became the more they hated it. The history of Australia for some years is that of a struggle between the two elements, the free and the bound ; and between these two came the Governor, who, as sole representative of the Crown, was forced to moderate between both, and who, in consequence, was generally the most unpopular man in the place.

In the first few years of British Australia there is thus little that is attractive, and there are few of those incidents which lend colour to the early records of other colonies. It is one drab expanse of misery and crime ; the real progress of the country began later ; for the transportation period is no more the history of Australia than the Newgate Calendar is the history of England.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST YEARS OF COLONISING : 1795-1821¹

WITH a touching belief in the possibility of founding a colonial empire out of the criminal population of England, the British Government continued to transport the convicts of the United Kingdom to Australia. It will probably give a clearer idea of the character of the earliest European settlers in the South Seas if a detailed list is set out of the crimes for which they were expelled their own country.

We may take as a typical instance the 170 prisoners who came out on board the *Neptune* in 1817. Of these 44 were convicted of felony, 41 of robbery and burglary, 17 of small thefts, 10 of grand larceny, 8 of forgery, 7 of highway robbery, 8 of horse stealing, 8 of sheep and cow stealing, 6 of circulating forged notes, 2 of desertion, 1 of frame breaking, 1 of assault and robbery, 1 of stealing from the person, 1 of larceny, 1 of obtaining goods under false pretences, 1 of breaking out of prison, 1 of aiding in the same, and 6 were respited of capital punishment. Six had been transported before, had served their time, and were now sentenced afresh for further crimes ; 85 were to be transported for life, 33 for fourteen years, and 52 for seven years.²

¹ Authorities.—Rusden's *History of Australia* is by far the best general work on the subject. Collins's *Account of the English Colony of New South Wales* is still useful as a contemporary chronicle. There are many other interesting histories of early Australia, and for at least the early part of the above period the great series of *Historical Records of New South Wales* renders all the authorities almost superfluous. Some curious information regarding transportation will be found in Reid's *Two Voyages to New South Wales*. Lang's *Historical and Statistical Account of New South Wales* is untrustworthy, but Wentworth's *New South Wales* should be consulted.

² I cite these cases in detail because it is sometimes stated that the convicts who were sent out to Australia were mostly the unfortunate victims of bad laws, mere poachers and sinners against the barbarous Game Acts, men who were just as honest as their fellows, except that they had stood

Other vessels carried similar cargoes. Some brought female convicts, who ranged from the thief and the associate of forgers to the diseased and intemperate street-walker. Others, again, carried the wives and children of the convicts, at times mixed promiscuously with the criminals.

Disturbances were common on the voyage. The men would conspire against the ship's officers. The boys were found indulging in unnatural vice. The sailors wished to live with the women. Not infrequently the women wished to live with the sailors. On some occasions this was connived at; on others it was forbidden. In one of the latter cases, the infuriated women attempted to mutilate the surgeon who had refused such licence.

It was common knowledge that reform was impossible, either on the voyage or on landing in Australia, even had the prisoners wished it; and many did not. 'Were angels from heaven placed here as we are,' said one of the women on a convict ship, 'they would in three nights be corrupted.'

And nothing availed to improve the conditions in the colony itself. Governor King on his arrival in 1800 found that the 'children were abandoned to misery, prostitution, and every vice of their parents.' Another wrote that 'vice of every description is openly encouraged.' All the old evils of immorality and drunkenness continued without

in the Old Bailey dock and vainly pleaded not guilty to trivial charges. That contention cannot be upheld when the cases are examined one by one, although several isolated instances can certainly be quoted in its favour. English justice in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was stern and harsh, but it was just, and it did not condemn a man for crimes he had not committed. The accused seldom got so far as the dock without good cause; he was rarely sentenced without having done something to warrant his punishment; and the crimes mentioned in the text are sufficient to show that most of the convicts who were transported had committed offences of a serious nature, the committal of which even under the present mild laws would be rewarded with five or ten years' penal servitude. The criminal does not vary much from age to age; and if some of those who pour out their sympathy over the criminal of the past were to study the criminal of the present at close quarters they would probably change their opinions.

abatement. Intercourse between the male and female convicts remained to a large extent promiscuous ; it was only limited, in fact, by the officials of the colony selecting the more attractive of the women for themselves. There were frequent disputes with the natives, for the prisoners would often tempt the aboriginal women to live with them, in the absence of more congenial, if temporary, partners of their own colour. The illegitimate children numbered one in ten of the whole population. And concubinage, it was stated, was held in higher esteem in New South Wales than marriage in England ; even the missionaries who left Tahiti for Sydney in 1799 were scarcely able to exaggerate the prevailing immorality when they appealed to London for help.

For some years there was no place of worship in the colony. The first church was not built until 1793 ; even when Richard Johnson, the chaplain who had come out with the original shipment of convicts, insisted on the erection of an edifice to be consecrated to divine service, he could obtain no assistance from the Government ; and St. Philip's, Sydney, as the rough barn of wattle and daub that was roofed with thatch was called, was built by his private exertions five years after the colony was founded.

The foundations of another church were at length laid at Parramatta, but before it was finished it was used as a prison, and after its completion it was turned into a granary.¹ The chaplain of New South Wales, a disciple of Wilberforce and an earnest evangelist, was snubbed by the officials whenever he attempted to hold a service ; and both the convicts and their rulers openly laughed at his ministrations.²

¹ It has been stated, I know not with what truth, that St. Philip's, Sydney, and St. John's, Parramatta, were named, not after the Christian saints, but after Governor Phillip and Captain John Hunter. But the insinuation is made by a cleric of a rival faith, the Catholic Ullathorne, in a very polemical *Reply to Judge Burton*.

² The playhouse was more successful than the Church in these early days. A theatre was opened at Sydney in 1798 by an ex-convict. The price of admission was one shilling ; but as the colony was badly supplied

It is true that there were some people of a better class among the early convicts in the colony. There were the five men who were transported to Australia nominally for 'stimulating the people of Scotland to effect a reform of parliament' in 1793, and who were generally known as the Scottish Martyrs. Their political schemes were visionary, and of that dangerous revolutionary type which so many copied from the French disorders of the time; but they were not criminals in the ordinary sense of the word. There were likewise some innocent victims of the Irish rebellion in 1798. But their numbers were too small to have any elevating influence: and the majority of the thousand Irish political convicts were wild and desperate men whom it was necessary to keep down with a firm hand. In 1804 they rebelled, incited thereto by the Scottish plotters. For some days the colony was under martial law; and years after the outbreak was suppressed the possibility of another such insurrection was a source of anxiety to the Government.

Nor did the convicts often show any improvement when their sentence expired. By an almost inconceivable piece of official negligence, the British Government had omitted to supply the authorities in Australia with records of the sentences which had been passed upon the criminals; and from the nature of things, the prisoner's word could not be accepted on the point.

Most of the convicts wished to return to England; and 'to compel these people to remain,' wrote Phillip, 'may be attended with unpleasant consequences; for they must be made to work if fed from the public stores, and if permitted to be their own masters they must rob, for they have no other way to support themselves.'¹

with currency, spectators were allowed to pay in kind, with a bag of flour or a bottle of rum. The ticket-office must have been as picturesque as the stage under these conditions.

¹ The authorities gave no free passages back to England to the time-expired convict, and few of them were therefore able to return. (See

To a large degree their release was a matter of guesswork, depending on a possibly quite misleading display of good conduct while in prison; and the new class of **The Emancipists.** population thus created, called emancipists, were idle, dissolute vagabonds, with no knowledge of agriculture, and no intention of cultivating the soil, so long as they could obtain free rations from headquarters, or pick up an even less reputable living by other means. King lamented that 'he could not make farmers of pickpockets'; and every governor complained that the women were worse than the men.¹ The men could be kept in rude order by flogging: the superintendent of police was allowed to flog publicly with fifty lashes or imprison for thirty days any person convicted of idle or disorderly conduct on the evidence of one credible witness; but the sternest disciplinarian shrank from applying such measures to women. And these latter were frequently upheld by the officers and soldiers who should have assisted the law.

The New South Wales Corps, to whom the task of keeping order was committed, was likewise corrupted by its surroundings. A rather dishonourable police service **The soldiery.** in the most distant of our possessions was not highly esteemed in England, and the best men seldom entered the corps while there was more glory to be obtained in the great European wars. And as the governor of the colony was appointed from the navy, there was constant friction between the two services.

evidence of T. Estcourt before Select Committee on Secondary Punishments, 1831: 'Speaking of country and agricultural parishes, I do not know of above one instance in all my experience' of transported convicts returning to England.) Yet some made their way back, as the lists of the *Neptune* transport, quoted a few pages earlier, prove.

It may be mentioned that the reward for an informer after a crime had been committed in Australia was sometimes a free passage away from the colony. But, hated as Botany Bay was by its involuntary settlers, even this did not always induce men to turn king's evidence.

¹ The type of which they consisted may be judged from such sentences in the official correspondence as 'among these are two young creatures, very abandoned . . . one is only thirteen and the other sixteen.'

Once arrived in Australia, the troops became almost as profligate as the convicts. They added to their pay by abusing their privileges. Something like a monopoly was established by the corps in many articles: the officers had first call on the stores sent out in Government ships, and they retailed the goods thus seized to the other inhabitants of the colony at enormous profits. Fortunes were accumulated in this way: it was calculated that a hundred pounds worth of South American tobacco would sell in Australia for four thousand pounds, while writing paper was two guineas a quire.

But all other kinds of traffic paled before the buying and selling of drink. Rum was at once the passion, the currency, and the ruin of the community. ‘Crops were no sooner gathered than they were instantly disposed of for spirits, which they purchased at the rate of three, nay, even four pounds per gallon—a spirit, too, often lowered one-fourth or more of its strength with water.’ The population, it was said, was divided between those who sold rum and those who drank it. There was neither gold nor silver in New South Wales: the Imperial Government persisted in sending out nothing but specie from England; and the result was that all debts were paid either in spirits or wheat. Of the two, the former was the more usual and popular. Even Macquarie, who was instructed on his appointment as Governor in 1810 to put down the traffic in spirits, priced the contract for the building of Sydney Hospital at over sixty thousand gallons of rum, while the wages of the workmen in his time were generally calculated at the rate of one gallon of rum weekly. The men refused at times to recognise payment in any other currency.

An attempt was made to abolish the traffic in spirits: but restrictions only made matters worse. Illicit stills were set up; and when these could not supply every need, an extensive system of smuggling made good the deficiency. As the contraband trade was mainly in the hands of the officers and

men of the New South Wales Corps, it was impossible to stop it. It was found, of course, that the passion for rum increased when the supply was made illegal. 'If people were thoroughly drenched with liquor,' wrote one resident, 'they would prefer water.' It was notorious that one supreme judge of the colony was never sober; and more than one of the magistrates was suspected of trading secretly in the very goods he was by law bound to prohibit.

It was evident that matters would not improve while Australia remained a prison: yet the British Government continued to send out two or three crowded trans-
The Hunter River Settlement, 1805. ports every year, satisfied to have got its criminals off its hands. New stations were established, as the population of Sydney grew unmanageable: and in all of them the evils inseparable from the convict system flourished as luxuriantly as in the parent settlement. When coal was discovered at the mouth of the Hunter River, the most desperate of the Irish convicts were transported to that district in 1805. The town of Newcastle was thus founded, and the counties of Northumberland and Durham marked out, the names at least being reminiscent of the mother country.

Another settlement was made at Port Phillip in 1803: but this proved abortive, mainly owing to the character of the man to whom it was entrusted. Collins, the excellent,
The Failure at Port Phillip, 1803. kindly officer in charge, whose annals were for long the only guide to the early history of Australia, was neither stern nor enterprising enough to found a convict colony. Although the place to which he was sent, with 299 male and 16 female convicts, had been highly spoken of by previous explorers, and although it was within a few miles of the splendid site on which Melbourne was to rise a few years later, he considered it altogether unsuitable for habitation. 'Every day's experience convinces me,' he reported, 'that it cannot, nor ever will, be resorted to'; the

soil seemed barren and sandy, the timber poor and stunted, there was not enough water, there were too many insects, snakes, lizards, and ants, while the natives were unfriendly and threatening. After a few months he removed the settlement to Tasmania.

But the penal colony of New South Wales had not been founded a year before it became clear that a criminal population was not the stuff out of which to fashion a self-respecting community. Governor Phillip requested again and again that free settlement should be encouraged. 'If,' he sent word to England, 'fifty farmers were sent out with their families, they would do more in one year in rendering this colony independent of the mother country as to provisions than a thousand convicts.'

Free
Settlement
Desired.

But his suggestions met with scant response. The emigration of some Quaker families was mooted, but nothing came of the idea. It was thought that the American Loyalists might remove to the antipodes; but those whose attachment to the Empire urged them to quit the newly-formed republic preferred Canada or the West Indies to Australia. And in the meantime the main tide of British emigration continued, independently of the political severance, to flow to the United States. Nor was it an unhealthy or an unpatriotic instinct which drew men to America instead of Australia. The antipodes were untried countries. The voyage was costly. Special permission had to be obtained from the Government before anybody could proceed thither. Many would naturally hesitate before undertaking a voyage to the other side of the world, and that, too, to a country where they could associate only with felons and loose women. And, in addition, there seemed less chance of achieving material success in Australia at that period than elsewhere.

But the land has yet to be discovered to which some few British pioneers do not feel themselves attracted. On 14th July 1792, the *Bellona* transport arrived at Sydney: and in

addition to her usual cargo of social wreckage and prison stores, she carried eleven free settlers. From time to time

The First Free Settlers, 1792.	their numbers were added to in subsequent years. Two or three families would come out in one vessel; in the next there would be none; and then again a few more would arrive.
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The process was a slow one. At times it was checked artificially, as when Governor Macquarie discouraged the free immigrants as far as possible, and declared that the emancipists were 'by many degrees the most useful members of the community'; and at no time was there any general impulse in England to undertake the thorough colonisation of Australia, as there had been as regards America, when the Royalists grew enthusiastic over Virginia, and the Puritans founded their kingdom of God in Massachusetts.

Yet slowly as the settlement of free men progressed, it never went backwards. The first arrivals began farming operations near Sydney, naming their abode Liberty Plains, to distinguish it from the forced-labour stations of the convicts in the neighbourhood; and when the results of one season's cultivation proved unprofitable, they removed to the rich 'country like an English park' on the Hawkesbury River. Here the magnificent virgin soil brought them immediate success; in fact, the greater part of their troubles henceforth were caused by the very easiness of their life.

The aborigines tried to plunder their corn. More than once a flood on the river swept away their farms and houses; but repeated warnings could not prevail upon them to build further away from the stream. It was complained that they became reckless, and spent 'their time and substance in drinking and rioting, and trusting to the extreme fertility of the soil, which they declared would produce an ample crop at any time without much labour.' It seems, indeed, that the free men rather imitated the habits of the convicts than set an example to the fallen. Nor is it wonderful that such was

the case, for they were few among many: their servants were convicts, their wives or concubines were often drawn from the same class; and though free themselves, they lived in the same tainted atmosphere of crime.

The terms offered to settlers by the Government were not, however, ungenerous: and it seems not to have been difficult to obtain further concessions from the colonial authorities. Far larger estates, indeed, were granted to, or at least taken by, the officers of the New South Wales Corps than to ordinary settlers; and one of their number, the first of the sheep-breeders or squatters, had already been the means of introducing into Australia one of the greatest, if not actually destined to be for all time the greatest, of the industries of the continent. John Macarthur, a lieutenant of the Corps, had obtained in 1793 a hundred acres of land near Parramatta: and the following year he began sheep-farming on an extensive scale.

John
Macarthur,
Pioneer,
Squatter
and Sheep-
Breeder,
1793.

An account of his methods survives in his own words. 'In 1794,' he writes, 'I purchased from an officer sixty Bengal ewes and lambs which had been imported from Calcutta, and very soon afterwards I procured from the captain of a transport from Ireland two Irish ewes and a young ram. The Indian sheep produced coarse hair, and the wool of the Irish sheep was then valued at no more than ninepence a pound. By crossing the two breeds I had the satisfaction to see the lambs of the Indian ewes bear a mingled fleece of hair and wool. This circumstance originated the idea of producing fine wool in New South Wales.'

In 1797 he bought some South African sheep, which fortunately included three rams and five ewes of a very fine Spanish breed; and these were added to by subsequent purchases on a visit to England. Macarthur, however, was not satisfied, as were most of his neighbours, merely with the sale of the sheep in the restricted local market, although he

notes in his journal for 1805 that the price of a fat wether was then £5. He continued patiently to breed, and cross, and select from his stock, which he pastured at Camden on the Cowpasture River, where he had acquired a large grant of ten thousand acres from the Government. In a few years he had obtained fleeces of the finest texture, which found a ready sale in the English wool market. From that day the success of Australia as a sheep-breeding country was assured.

Had Macarthur been content to abide by the expert advice of the British Government, the antipodes might have waited long before their fleeces competed with the merinos of Spain in the markets of the world ; for the Government, taking that uniformly pessimistic view of the prospects of Australia which had become its habit, strongly dissuaded him from the experiments he undertook. But the obstinacy of the man, as outstanding a feature in his character as the bold if frequently tactless honesty which makes him the one conspicuously pleasing figure in the annals of early New South Wales, triumphed in the end.

It was inevitable that so successful a citizen as Macarthur should take a prominent part in the social and political events of the colony ; and his influence was generally exerted for good, in opposition to the miserable system of administration which then prevailed at Sydney. The first occasion on which he intervened in the public affairs of the day was in 1807, in the crisis which led to the deposition of Governor Bligh early in the following year.

Captain William Bligh was a distinguished officer of the British navy : he was the hero or the victim of the famous mutiny on the *Bounty* ;¹ and he had been publicly thanked by Nelson for the gallantry and skill he had displayed at the bombardment of Copenhagen. But however valuable his qualities as an officer at sea—and there is no reason to doubt them—he was not by

Deposition
of Governor
Bligh, 1808.

¹ See bk. xx. ch. i.

any means fitted to act as a colonial governor. Tyrannical and choleric in disposition, the same defects of leadership which had caused the mutiny on the *Bounty* incensed the free settlers of New South Wales. Bligh's favouritism, mostly extended to unworthy objects, roused general indignation; and the doggedness with which he maintained his creatures in office made matters worse.

In any case, a naval officer commanding military troops was in a delicate position, owing to the traditional jealousy of the services; and the extent of Bligh's diplomacy may be gauged from one of his outbursts. 'The law, sir!' he cried in a rage; 'damn the law! My will is the law, and woe unto the man that dares disobey it.' And however genuine were his efforts to stop the liquor traffic which still disgraced the colony, he was wholly in the wrong when he attempted to make a scapegoat of Macarthur, whose wealth was acquired by honourable industry: and the latter, who had fought a duel with his superior officer when in the army, was the last man to allow himself to be accused without just cause.

Bligh seems indeed to have conceived an unworthy spite against the great stock breeder. 'Are you to have such flocks of sheep, and such herds of cattle,' he said to him once, 'as no man ever heard of before? No, sir! I have heard of your concerns, sir; you have five thousand acres of land in the fairest situation in the country, but, by God, you shall not keep it.'

Macarthur replied with perfect truth that he held his lands by order of the Secretary of State on the recommendation of the Privy Council; but Bligh retorted passionately, 'Damn the Privy Council! and damn the Secretary of State too! What have they to do with me? You have made a number of false statements respecting your wool by which you have obtained this land.'

The accusation was unjust: but so far from retracting it, other charges were levelled by Bligh against Macarthur. The

squatter was arrested on a pretext, tried by a judge who was an ex-convict, and committed to prison.

These arbitrary proceedings, which showed that Bligh's character had not changed since the revolt of his crew on the *Bounty*, at once set the freemen of the colony in an uproar. Nobody was secure when such acts were possible; and the unpopularity of Bligh came to a head through his persecution of the leading man in New South Wales. An immediate agitation was raised for his deposition. Major Johnston, the military officer who had put down the Irish convict rebellion of 1804, took upon himself to insist on Macarthur's release; and the Governor was himself arrested. 'You are charged by the respectable inhabitants,' said Johnston to Bligh, 'of crimes that render you unfit to exercise the supreme authority another moment in this colony, and in that charge all the officers serving under my command have joined.' The gang of Bligh's favourites fell with their master; and the administration was carried on by Johnston and his brother officers until a new governor had been sent out from England.

At the exhaustive enquiry subsequently held into what was legally an act of rebellion against the Crown, Johnston and those who had acted with him were substantially acquitted, and Bligh's conduct was thus constructively condemned: but Macarthur was for some years refused permission to reside in Australia. In no part of his career was the dogged honesty of the man more admirably displayed. He was pining to return to his wife and children, his estates and stock-breeding experiments. But unless he acquiesced in a decision that left a stigma on his character, the British Government would not grant him a permit; and he declined to return until he was given an absolutely free pardon. Denied again and again on various or no pretexts, he continued to state his case before the official world.

When at length his desire was acceded to, he found a new policy had been inaugurated in Australia. There was, indeed,

no diminution in the number of convicts who were despatched thither. There was no perceptible change in the character of the crimes of which they had been convicted.

The criminal law of England had not been altered, nor had a new system of treatment been

Governor
Macquarie,
1810-21.

recommended to the Governor of New South Wales by his superiors at home. But Macquarie, the new governor, had himself changed the official policy on his own initiative. He came out to Australia with a generous desire to better the condition of the convicts. He was not incorrect in thinking that they had often been treated in an 'extraordinary and illiberal' fashion; and his desire to reform them, and to convert them from felons into respectable citizens was worthy of all praise.

But well-meaning as he was, he carried his ideas to an extreme, that if permanently persisted in would have left a perpetual slur of crime on the antipodes. He discouraged the immigration of untainted free men, for, according to him, 'the best description of settlers were emancipated convicts, or persons become free by servitude who have been convicts.' This grotesque misconception was fortified by the warning that 'free people should consider they are coming to a convict country, and if they are too proud or too delicate in their feelings to associate with the population of the country, they should consider it in time, and bend their course to some other country.' He did more. He irritated the free settlers of New South Wales by endeavouring to make them receive the time-expired convicts into their society. 'My principle,' he declared, 'is that when once a man is free, his former state should no longer be remembered or allowed to act against him.' As a legal maxim, the justice of this was self-evident: but human society is not controlled by legal maxims, and it by no means followed that freemen would welcome as guests at their dinner-tables, or as profitable companions for their wives

His
Favouritism
towards the
Emancipists.

and children, convicts whose sentences had been served. And Macquarie's attempts to run counter to what he would have called the prejudices of colonial society merely made the free settlers more determined to resist him.

Emancipists were invited to functions at Government House; the only result was that freemen stayed away. Before Macquarie had been at Sydney a fortnight, an emancipist was made a magistrate; the inevitable outcome was that freemen as well as convicts held the judicial tribunals of the colony in contempt. On the same principle, when the Governor founded the Bank of New South Wales in 1817, one who had served a sentence for felony was among the directors; it need not be wondered at that the public confidence in the security of its investments was limited.

There were soon violent protests at Macquarie's favouritism. When Macarthur deplored the regulations which placed 'the good and bad servant, the honest man and the thief, upon the same footing, and authorised him not only to claim but to insist upon the same indulgences,' he only expressed what every respectable colonist was thinking.

But the emancipists became rich through the privileges loaded on them. They flaunted their wealth insultingly before those who had had no advantages save what their own industry and honesty had provided them with. And it soon became evident that conviction for a crime in England was equivalent to signing the indentures for a colonial apprenticeship, which after a few years would provide a ready means of entering on a successful career on the other side of the globe.

It is true that Macquarie's action was dictated by humane motives. Much of his work during the eleven years that he was Governor of New South Wales was highly beneficial. He built largely; and in a new country every new building is a national asset. He improved Sydney almost out of recognition. Much important exploration of the interior was undertaken in his time. In many ways he was an excel-

lent ruler. But his whole administration was vitiated by his experiment, humanitarian indeed but predestined to failure, of endeavouring to transmute the dross of felony into the gold of citizenship.

It may be freely granted that the original fault lay with England, in her blind policy of abandoning a magnificent country to the lowest class of her population. But Macquarie did not disapprove of transportation ; it was free immigration that he objected to. It was not so much that he thought the punishment too heavy for the crime ; it was rather that he thought the taint could be eradicated in a new land, and that a continent was well sacrificed for the purpose of the experiment.

Perhaps it was well that the experiment was made ; for if anything could have justified transportation as a means of reforming the criminal, the eleven years of Macquarie's government would have justified it.

In the end he failed ; but by his failure the future of Australia was secured. The very resistance which the free settlers made proves their growing strength. Discouraged as they had been, they had still advanced, while the ex-convicts remained discontented and mutinous, even under Macquarie's policy of favouritism. As Gibbon Wakefield characterised them in his first anonymous publication in 1829, they 'talked of perfect independence ; they were rebels, every one of them, at heart ; and nothing but a sense of weakness deterred them from drawing the sword.' They had indeed no reason to be loyal. They had been cast out from the mother country in disgrace ; and though they had served their sentences, and under the fostering care of the Governor of New South Wales had even acquired property, they were socially ostracised. 'The civil and military officers,' complained Macquarie, 'were in the habit of exacting from emancipated convicts the same species of respect as they had yielded in their former state of servitude' ; and nothing that he could do made any alteration

Growing
Influence
of the Free
Settlers.

in their social status. There might be hope for their children ; for themselves there was none.

But the fact that the influence of the free settlers was becoming more marked in the colony, while the evils caused by the convicts did not diminish and their numbers increased yearly, pointed to the speedy arrival of a day when the free-men, for their own protection, would find it incumbent upon themselves to insist that transportation should cease entirely. At the time they were not strong enough : but the question of the class of immigrants whom it was desirable to encourage was already being debated.

The one great industry of the country, thanks to Macarthur, was pastoral ; and it was but natural, in view of his own **The Squatter Aristocracy.** success, that he should advocate large landed settlement and the extension of the squatter system. The small farmer, he thought, could not exist in Australia ; and many of the latter type who had emigrated to make a fortune had, in fact, become bankrupt, although their failure was rather due to their own carelessness, which he had been the first to condemn, and to the peculiar conditions then existing in the country, than to the inherent weakness of the smallholder in a new land. But they were certainly heavily handicapped. The only labour they could obtain was that of convicts, which was almost invariably unsatisfactory ; and practically their only market outside Sydney was in England, while there were no means of transport or communication within the colony save what they could themselves provide, and only irregular and expensive transport to Europe. And the smallholder required to turn over his capital quickly to derive any profit from it, whereas the great landowner could wait for years if necessary.¹

¹ In this matter, of course, Macarthur and his fellow-squatters were only echoing the views of the dominant school in English agriculture, whose foremost representative was Arthur Young. That school held strongly to the belief, and there was much to justify it, that farming must be on a large scale to be successful.

Macarthur, therefore, was able to make out a good case for the encouragement of capitalist pioneers, through which the strong aristocratic prejudice of the territorial proprietor and the ex-officer shows itself with somewhat amusing ingenuousness. 'Adventurers without capital,' he said, 'retard all improvement, and as they sink deeper into poverty and distress swell the mass of discontent, become most furious democrats, and attribute the misery into which they are plunged not to their own idleness or want of discretion, but to the errors of the Government and the oppression of the wealthy.' In Macarthur's eyes democrat, emancipist, radical and rogue were almost synonymous terms.

The subsequent history of Australia was to show that both the squatter and the small farmer had their use and place in the economy of the country.

BOOK XVIII

THE PURIFICATION OF AUSTRALIA :

1821-68

CHAPTER I

THE END OF TRANSPORTATION : 1821-68¹

THE first half of the nineteenth century was heralded by many excellent persons in England and elsewhere as the beginning of a period in the history of the world during which mankind as a whole was to forget its original national and racial sentiments in the appreciation of a doctrine of universal brotherhood and general benevolence. Unfortunately for the delightful theory of international concord, it was precisely during this period that a great revival of national sentiment took place in Europe ; and it was noticed as a remarkable phenomenon by close observers that this revival in the old world was paralleled by an equally pronounced movement in

¹ Authorities.—Rusden continues the general history of transportation. Those who desire fuller details of the subject will find them in the official records (some of which are still in manuscript) and among the newspaper files of New South Wales ; as also in the parliamentary debates, reports, and governmental despatches on this question. In addition, for Tasmania, Bonwick's *Last of the Tasmanians* and *The Lost Tasmanian Race* ; also the histories by West and Fenton. There is much scattered information in G. T. Lloyd's *Thirty-three Years in Tasmania and Victoria* ; his writings are of peculiar interest, since he was one of the few advocates of transportation.

For Norfolk Island, Burton's *State of Religion in New South Wales*, and the same author's paper on 'Society and Crime' (in the *Colonial Magazine*) ; and Maconochie's 'Criminal Statistics of Norfolk Island' in the *Statistical Society's Journal*. The latter writer was more successful as a statistician than as an official. Bunbury's *Reminiscences* are interesting, but of small historical value.

the new. The unity of the English republic in America was cemented by civil war. The imperial provinces of Canada passed through the years of internal strife and agitation which are the inevitable accompaniment of the birth of a new nation. And a generation later, the same pains of labour in the antipodes preceded and proclaimed the birth of another nation—the new English nation in Australia.

But the awakening of a national spirit in Australia was delayed by the evil conditions which accompanied its early colonisation. The slur of crime lay over the island continent for more than half a century ; and it was first necessary that its various provinces should be purified of the convict stain before they could become the foundation of a united nation. A child may be born in sin : a nation cannot.

The purification of Australia was therefore the immediate work which lay before the English in the antipodes during the early years of the nineteenth century. The task was indeed stupendous, but it was achieved ; yet not without a struggle with the imperial authorities that at one time bade fair to end in serious disorder and armed rebellion.

We have already noticed some of the evils introduced into Australia by the system of convict colonisation. Yet terrible as they were, these were but the minor ills that sprang from transportation. The full results of the policy that was persisted in by the imperial authorities must now be traced.

The original convict colony at Sydney had within a few years become the parent of other settlements of a like character. Norfolk Island, Newcastle on the Hunter River, and Tasmania were all made the homes of English criminals. Nor did it appear probable that the hand of sin was even yet stretched out over the antipodes to its fullest extent.

The Convict
System
Spreads.

Year by year shipload after shipload of wretched men and women were despatched to Australia. It was impossible to herd them all together at Sydney ; in the words of Sir Joseph

Banks, that place had become 'completely saturated; we must let it rest and purify for a few years until it is in a condition to receive again.' Accordingly, other parties were sent to Moreton Bay in the future colony of Queensland, and to King George's Sound in West Australia; it was only the failure of a second attempt to found a convict establishment at Port Phillip that saved the province of Victoria from the criminal taint.

But these settlements, like Sydney, rapidly became congested. And with a whole continent waiting to be colonised, it seemed possible to the British Government that the process of defilement might be continued indefinitely.

The successor of Governor Macquarie, who retired from New South Wales in 1821, faced indeed an impossible task.

New South
Wales,
1821-40.

On the one hand, the free settlers were dissatisfied with the favouritism that had been shown the emancipists; on the other, the emancipists were discontented because they were not received in the free society of the colony. And the new Governor, Sir Thomas Brisbane, was not firm enough in character to hold fast to any policy against which a strong current of opposition was directed.

A man of science who took considerable interest in astronomy and exploration—his name lives in the capital of Queensland and the river on which it stands—Brisbane was able at first to repress outward disorder, whether it sprang from native, bushranger, or convict, while his chief official stiffened his back for him; but when Goulburn, the Colonial Secretary, resigned after a quarrel, Brisbane fell more and more under the influence of the emancipists. He followed the line of least resistance in conciliating that numerically large class, which now used every means of agitation in its power: but his efforts to imitate Macquarie, and to carry his predecessor's policy to a successful conclusion, still fell helplessly against the resolve of the free settlers not to mix with the tainted element on equal or, if possible, on any terms.

Brisbane was followed in 1825 by Ralph Darling, a soldier who cared nothing for public opinion or agitation, and whose sternness was as much hated by the emancipists as it was welcomed by the freemen. So detested was he by the former that his rule was described by them as a reign of terror ; and on his departure a tumult of rejoicing took place among the baser inhabitants of Sydney. Oxen were roasted whole, and the mob had the indecency to carry a bullock's head in procession through the streets and finally to exhibit it before the port-hole of the ship's cabin in which Lady Darling was waiting to sail.

The new Governor, Sir Richard Bourke, who assumed control in 1831, steered a middle course between the extreme favouritism of Macquarie and the severe coercion of Darling. His enemies derided his mildness in referring to runaway convicts as absentees, and cursed his folly in appointing time-expired criminals to the magistracy : his friends perhaps doubted the wisdom of his policy with some reason. In any case, the colony remained in a dangerous state of disorder : and the Judge's Charge to the Supreme Court of New South Wales in 1835 furnishes fearful evidence of the insecurity and crime that continued unabated. ' In 1833,' said the Chief Justice, ' there were 135 capital convictions ; on 69 sentence of death had been passed. In 1834, there were 148 capital convictions, on 83 of which sentence of death had been passed. In 1835 there were 116 capital convictions, and 71 sentences to suffer death. . . . [And] it was to be remarked that capital punishment had been taken away from several offences since August 1833, so that those which had taken place since that time had been for crimes of violence, murder, rape, robbery, burglary, maliciously stabbing, shooting, and wounding, and offences of similar character. . . . The picture presented was one of the most painful : it would appear as if the main business were the commission of crime and the punishment of it ; as

Crime and
Education
in the
Colony.

if the whole colony were continually in motion towards the several courts of justice.’¹

There were many minor reasons, apart from the one great reason that transportation continued, for the persistent disorders. Most of the free settlers took no interest in, or care of, their convict servants; beyond the mere selfish protection of their houses and persons, and the extraction of a certain daily minimum of work, the masters left their assigned labourers very much to themselves. As a result, escape was often not difficult; while the recapture of a deserter, despite the efforts of the surrounding settlers and a large body of civil and military police, involved a long and frequently a fruitless chase. The deserter, if he survived, might become a bush-ranger or a sheep and cattle thief; he might gain a livelihood by selling illicit drink at secret but regular criminal haunts; or he might even, if he were so daring, risk further imprisonment by coming down to Sydney and there living under an assumed name or attempting to return to Britain.

If the escaped or pardoned convict simulated a politic or effected a real reformation of character, he had some opportunities of becoming rich and independent in a country which, maugre its crime, was yet making a rapid material advance; but many, perhaps most, sank to the condition graphically described by a traveller in New South Wales. ‘One will often,’ remarked Henderson, ‘stumble upon a miserable cabin, shut out from the rays of the sun, instinct with life in the shape of gigantic mosquitoes and other vermin, and inhabited by a lonely sawyer and his dirty and forbidding wife or mistress, probably a ticket-of-leave woman or emancipist.

¹ Previous to this period it would appear that prisoners suspected of crime were flogged or otherwise tortured to make them confess.—House of Commons Papers, 18th April 1826. Ullathorne (*Reply to Judge Burton*) malignantly remarks that three of the magistrates responsible for ordering the flogging were clerics. So was Ullathorne himself, but a cleric of another faith. Evidently he thought it legitimate to blacken the cloth, so long as it was a different cut from his own.

If there are any children, they are in the last stage of squalor and filth, their pale emaciated features already showing that fever and ague have begun their work. . . . When rum is brought, and a few sawyers are convened, then begin scenes of riot. . . .’

Another secondary reason for the disorders was the establishment of road-parties of working convicts. It is true that these gangs were instrumental in constructing thoroughfares in the bush; but the gangs themselves were described by Judge Burton as ‘establishments like beehives, the inhabitants busily pouring in and out—but with this difference, the one work by day, the other by night; the one goes forth to industry, the other to plunder.’ And while crime was unabated, if not actually growing, drink was still the curse of the colony. New South Wales was probably the only agricultural country in the world in which the amount of rum imported exceeded the amount of wheat exported; and much vile liquor was compounded in secret stills, in addition to the genuine spirit legally imported.

Nor did the sexual morality of New South Wales show any improvement. The female factory near Sydney, in which women convicts were housed, was spoken of by Macarthur as ‘a hotbed of depravity, where idleness gave full scope for the growth of every vicious propensity, and from which a contagious influence was spreading itself far and wide.’ If any children were born in that awful place, they were taken away from their mothers at the age of three and educated separately in an orphan school, lest they should be contaminated by their own parents. And even pure women who were sent out to give a better tone to the community too often fell into the same habits as their dissolute sisters, so strong was the example of evil. ‘To pour from time to time,’ said Archbishop Whately of Dublin with truth when speaking of this subject, ‘sound wine into a cask of vinegar, in hopes of converting the vinegar

back into wine, would have been as rational and hopeful a scheme.'

Most of the women who were deported to the antipodes had left their virtue many years behind them in England. Some of them possibly discovered it again in Australia. But the majority seem to have preferred the elastic ties of periodic concubinage to the permanent restraints of matrimony ; and a number found it profitable and perhaps satisfactory to ply an ancient trade in a new land. There were still three men to every two women in the colony, even six years after transportation had ceased : and since most up-country settlers came down occasionally to Sydney to obtain supplies and to spend their money freely on dissipation, that particular market was probably neither overcrowded nor its prices undercut.

The schools of the colony were not yet advanced beyond the rudimentary stage : nor indeed could they be either efficient or numerous, when it is remembered that in 1825 less than £10,000 was spent on education, and that further economies were made under this head in the years immediately following ; while even in 1837, after Archdeacon T. H. Scott had spent much labour in improving and extending the existing scholastic apparatus, they cost but £13,014. By that time the five infant schools of Darling's administration had grown into thirty-four or more primary free schools, in addition to the orphan schools, a voluntary school of female industry, and the King's School at Parramatta. But out of ten thousand children in New South Wales only two thousand could read ; and in 1846, out of a total population of 189,609, there were still 69,393 persons returned as illiterate. It is fair to remember that many of these ignorant citizens must be accredited to the mother country, which still neglected for another quarter of a century the education of her children ; but Australia, though showing some signs of awakening attention to the mental needs of her early offspring, had not

yet made any decided steps along the road she has since trodden so well.

On the other hand, if knowledge was starved, the administration of justice was of necessity liberally endowed. By far the largest item of expenditure in the annual budget was that on the police service, which in 1837 amounted to £45,200, 13s. 4d.; and the judicial establishment cost an additional £20,229, 3s. 9d. But it throws a curious light on the methods and the civilisation of the early nineteenth century that the educational training of the people should have been everywhere neglected, while its punitive organisation, in consequence, was excessively developed. It was both a false economy and a selfish cruelty that neglected the child, and therefore found it necessary to punish the adult.

But crime had increased enormously in Great Britain during and since the Napoleonic wars. Industrial distress and political agitation had jeopardised the state more than once, and the sole remedy still seemed to be to transport the offenders to the antipodes. Complaints, however, were now coming from New South Wales in stronger form year by year as to the evil effect of the system on the rising generation in Australia.

Macarthur, the pioneer sheep farmer of the colony, foretold rebellion if transportation continued; Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who was already meditating the foundation of a more honourable commonwealth in the southern seas,¹ endorsed the prophecy and partially agreed as to the remedy. Macarthur, who looked on every radical as a rogue, and on every democrat as a public danger, advocated the immigration of 'a body of really respectable settlers; men of real capital, not needy adventurers. They should have estates of at least ten thousand acres, with reserves contiguous of equal extent. Such a body of proprietors would in a few years become wealthy, and, with the support of the Government, powerful

¹ See ch. iii. of this book, and bk. xxi. ch. ii. for the Wakefield colonies.

as an aristocracy. The democratic multitude would look upon their large possessions with envy, and upon the proprietors with hatred. As this democratic feeling has already taken deep root in the colony in consequence of the absurd and mischievous policy pursued by Governor Macquarie, it cannot be too soon opposed with vigour.' He wished also still further to bridle the infant press of the colony, which was actively and not very scrupulously directed by the emancipists; and he characterised the four Sydney newspapers with some truth as being 'all in the convict interest, the editors all desperate radicals, alike shameless and unprincipled,' who 'inflamed the worst passions of the lower orders, exciting a spirit of animosity towards the upper classes, and contempt for all legitimate authorities.'

Many of the free settlers agreed with him in principle, though their language was perhaps less extreme. A section, it is true, were ready to assent to transportation so long as it furnished them with cheap labour; but the majority loathed the constant influx of criminals, and fully recognised that the evil reputation of the colony deterred men of better character from settling there. New South Wales was the one country in the world, said an old colonist, to which a man was ashamed of going, and to which he was careful not to allude on his return home. Fortunes were made there; but instead of being proud of the land in which they had acquired them, men concealed their place of origin, lest it should be thought that the first stepping-stone to wealth had been the Old Bailey dock.

And other grave anomalies appeared as transportation continued. Ex-convicts obtained the right to sit on juries; but no free settler would willingly consent to have his case tried by men of that kidney, and military juries still remained in favour. The latter knew little of business and less of law; but there was at least a reasonable probability that honest men would be empanelled. It went hard with a free citizen

who came before a jury of ex-criminals ; but the latter were naturally merciful to their own class. On one occasion a jury of emancipists acquitted a convict who had murdered his wife, and similar miscarriages of justice were not rare ; while in another instructive instance the prisoner exercised his right of challenging the jury, and thus eliminated all the respectable men, while the prosecutor for the Crown was forced to challenge all the rest for want of character, and the trial therefore could not proceed.

Such outrages could not continue indefinitely. Yet while transportation persisted there was no means of remedying them : and Bourke's governorship had come to an end, and Sir George Gipps succeeded him in 1838 ; but still vessels regularly brought their cargo of iniquity to New South Wales.

Parliamentary Enquiry into Transportation, 1837.

It happened, however, that circumstances had at that time caused England to take a somewhat unusual amount of interest in her possessions overseas. Gibbon Wakefield had begun to make his theories regarding colonisation known, and had gained a small but powerful body of adherents. The rebellion in Canada had proved that there was a flaw in the British method of governing distant dependencies. Sporadic trouble in South Africa brought that lesson home from another quarter of the globe. And it was evident that the protests from Australia against the continuance of transportation indicated a deep feeling of discontent in the antipodes.

The Canadian crisis was settled by a statesmanlike solution.¹ The South African problem unhappily received no such judicious treatment ; it was allowed to fester and rankle till it became an interminable legacy of discord and difficulty for a later generation.² But wiser counsels prevailed as regards Australia, and a Select Parliamentary Committee was appointed in 1837, after a discussion on the subject in

¹ See vol. iii. bk. xi. chs. iv. and v.

² See vol. vi. bks. xxiv. and xxvi.

the House of Commons, to enquire into the whole question of transportation.

The Committee sat for many months, and a mass of evidence was taken. It was proved that crime and immorality had attained terrible proportions in Australia; that the great bulk of the disorders came from the convicts and ex-convicts; and that the progress of the country was seriously hampered by the continuance of the system. The miserable story of a fifty years' experiment was told in all its disgusting but hitherto unrealised details; and it was suggested that the experiment had failed even in its original idea of being a deterrent to the evil-doer at home. 'Transportation,' said the Committee, 'may perhaps relieve Great Britain and Ireland from a portion of their burthen of crime; though from the little apprehension which it produces that fact may be reasonably doubted.'¹

That the system had generally failed in its reformative aspect was abundantly clear; the very appointment of a Committee of Enquiry, and the protests and petitions which had led to that enquiry, were evidence that it had worked badly in Australia. It was therefore finally recommended by the Committee that 'transportation to New South Wales and to the unsettled districts of Van Diemen's Land should cease as soon as

Transport-
ation sus-
pended 1841.

¹ An idea had got abroad in England, fostered no doubt largely by Macquarie's methods of government, that transportation was no very terrible punishment. The evidence of Sir George Arthur, Governor of Tasmania, which had been published in the *Correspondence on the Subject of Secondary Punishments* in 1834, should have disabused those who held this view. 'Deprived of liberty,' he wrote, 'exposed to all the caprice of the family to whose service he may happen to be assigned, and subject to the most summary laws, the condition of a convict in no respect differs from that of a slave, except that his master cannot apply corporal punishment by his own hands or those of his overseer, and has a property in him for a limited period only. . . . Idleness and insolence of expression, or even of looks, subjects (the convict) to the chain-gang or to hard labour on the roads.'

Nevertheless, it is the fact that a good many convicts made their escape into the bush or into the islands of the Pacific (bk. xx. ch. i.). Their life may or may not have been miserable; but at least it was free.

practicable.' The British Government decided to act on the advice; and Lord John Russell announced that 'in August 1840 transportation to New South Wales would cease for ever.' Almost at the same time, on 8th October 1838, Gipps was able to inform the Legislative Council of the colony that 'all convicts arriving in future from the United Kingdom were to be transferred to Norfolk Island. . . . The settlers must be prepared for the immediate diminution of assignments, and the speedy discontinuance of it altogether.'

The doom of transportation seemed sealed, and the convict ship *Eden*, which arrived at Port Jackson on 18th November 1840, was to be the last vessel landing a criminal cargo on the shores of New South Wales.

But the lowest organisms of nature are often those which are the most tenacious of life, and four years later the British Government, under Lord Stanley, attempted to ^{But revived} revive the vicious system. The advantages of ^{1848.} convict labour were paraded before the Australians by the Colonial Office, and a small number of settlers were not unwilling to see the resumption of transportation. But the best men of the colony detested the idea, and on that occasion it failed. Two years later a similar scheme adumbrated by Gladstone likewise proved abortive; but in September 1848 an Order in Council was issued under which New South Wales was again marked out as a transportation area.

The indignation in the colony was intense. Earl Grey defended his action on the ground that the 'judgment of the Legislature had varied at different times, and the opinions of the country were known to be divided'; and this was in fact so far true that the emancipists and less reputable settlers had been opposed to the abolition of transportation in 1840. Opinion, however, had rapidly advanced since that time; and while only 525 signatures could now be obtained for petitions in favour of the continuance of a modified system

of transportation, 36,589 persons in the Sydney district alone prayed for its total and immediate abolition.

When the first of the new convict vessels arrived at Port Jackson on 11th June 1849, the situation became dangerous. Robert Lowe was then a settler in Australia ; and he at once protested publicly, in the same passionate and bitter terms which the British House of Commons afterwards came to know so well, that ' the time was not far distant when they would assert their freedom not by words alone. As in America, oppression was the parent of independence ; so it would be in that colony.'

The immediate crisis was averted by sending the convicts to the remoter country districts and to Moreton Bay ; but in August of the same year the convict ship *Randolph* arrived in Port Phillip Bay. Now the southern district of New South Wales, as the present state of Victoria was then called, had never been a convict settlement, and the master of the vessel was instructed to carry his unwelcome cargo on to Sydney. He refused, on the ground that he was insured as far as Melbourne only ; and the *Randolph* dropped anchor in Hobson's Bay. But the local government was as determined as the sailor ; and when it became evident that he could only land his prisoners by exercising physical force, he at length consented to leave for Sydney.

These proceedings showed in no uncertain light the intensity of hate with which the Australians regarded the attempt to reimpose the convict slur. And that no loophole of escape should be left to the British Government, the Legislative Council of New South Wales resolved ' as its final conclusion that no more convicts (were) to be sent to any part of the colony,' and declared that in no other way could social and political tranquillity be maintained ; while the people of Tasmania, with an outspoken severity not altogether unjustified, decided that Earl Grey's ' subterfuges, equivocations, and breaches of faith ' over this

Finally
Abolished in
New South
Wales, 1851.

question had 'unhappily destroyed all confidence in his administration of colonial affairs.'

At length, in April 1851, Lord Grey yielded ; but he yielded with evident regret. It is obvious, indeed, that neither he, nor Stanley, nor yet Gladstone—high-minded Englishmen all, whose title to statesmanship cannot be gainsaid—ever understood the real grounds upon which the Australians objected to the contamination of their land. They would have understood promptly, and protested strenuously, had it been proposed to transplant Australian or Canadian felons to Great Britain ; the fact that they were unable to perceive the parallel case demonstrates in how small a measure the problems of empire were appreciated in those days at the imperial headquarters.

Meanwhile, when the parent colony of New South Wales became inconveniently crowded, the Government had cast their eyes further afield for suitable convict stations. There was some belief that the French **Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), 1803-56.** had designs on Tasmania, then known as Van Diemen's Land ; and both in order to prevent Gallic aggrandisement in Australasia and to relieve the growing congestion at Sydney, two settlements were made in 1803, the one at Port Dalrymple in the north of the island, the other at Restdown on the Derwent River in the south. Restdown was soon corrupted into Risdon ; and five miles away were laid the foundations of the capital of Hobart, so called from the name of the then British Colonial Secretary. A few free settlers appeared in 1804, and others followed from time to time ; but for half a century they remained a small minority. The basic population remained criminal and convict.¹

The map of modern Tasmania, which is inscribed with such reminders of the homeland as Dorset and Devon, Corn-

¹ In the *Proceedings* of the Royal Society of Tasmania it is stated that the original population of Hobart Town, which was founded on 21st February 1804, consisted of 226 men, 15 women, and 21 children,—of these 18 were free settlers, 26 were soldiers, and 187 were convicts.

wall and Lincoln, Cumberland and Kent, seems to speak rather of peaceful settlement by the yeoman stock of the mother country than of the years of blood and crime which in fact besmirch the earlier history of the colony. Yet the evil results of the transportation system were even more apparent in the island than on the continent, for they not only exhibited the degradation of our own people, but they involved the extinction of another race.

The earlier years of the local administration were lax and feeble. The convicts, who were allotted to the free settlers as labourers, frequently escaped into the bush, or across to the isles of Bass Strait; and in a country then almost trackless, or on wild islets almost unknown, few efforts to recapture them could be successful. And few efforts seem to have been made to do so.

The refugees speedily became bushrangers of desperate type, robbing both natives and whites as necessity dictated and opportunity allowed; or if they clung to the islands of the Furneaux group they picked up a precarious living as sealers. They were joined by deserters from the military guard and by escaped sailors from the whaling ships that traded in the district: and though the freedom of the life was grateful to the outlaws, some terrible stories of their privations and their cruelties have survived.

On one occasion, when a party of eight were together in the bush, hunger seized them. They had no food and could obtain none. Three of the gang fled; the other four then killed and ate the fifth. A second and a third met with a like fate. The two last eyed each other hungrily, well knowing that death would overtake the one who relaxed guard. One at length fell asleep exhausted; his companion ate him, and, overcome with horror, gave himself up.¹

¹ Cannibalism was not unknown in the convict stations. There is a horrible story of a convict who escaped with seven companions into the

Misery of
its Early
Years.

Both bushrangers and sealers inflicted the most inhuman wrongs on the aborigines. They stole or seduced the women ; they kidnapped the children. The outlaws were **outrages on** careless of their own lives ; they naturally did not **the natives.** esteem the death of a native worth a second thought. One man confessed that he had rather kill a black fellow than smoke a pipe, and admitted with pride that ‘ he was a rare one at that too.’ Another acknowledged that ‘ he had as lief shoot them as so many sparrows.’ In some cases, the natives were bound to trees, and used as human targets for practice ; in others, they were shot to supply food for the dogs. Poisoned rum was given them, and the miserable wretches, with the fatal craving of the black for potent spirits, swallowed the mixture greedily. The most wanton cruelty was indulged in : one man, for instance, remembered ‘ cutting off the finger of a native and using it as a pipe-stopper.’ Nor were the paramours of the bushrangers better treated in many cases. Instances were known of women being chained to a tree, and flogged with a bullock-whip ‘ to subdue their sulks.’ One man who lived with a native girl shot her because, when both were being pursued, she could not keep pace with him. Both women and children were sometimes subjected to unnatural uses. Perhaps the most terrible instance of brutality was that recorded of the man who slew a native, tied the husband’s head round the wife’s neck, and then drove the wretched creature before him to his den.

The Government seemed powerless to stop the outrages. Proclamations were indeed issued, such as that of 26th June 1813, which stated that ‘ the resentment of these poor uncultivated beings has been justly provoked by a most barbarous and inhuman mode of proceeding, the robbing of their

bush. Lack of food drove them to eat each other ; but when the single survivor gave himself up he had acquired the taste for human flesh. He decoyed away another prisoner, and killed and ate him, although the fugitives had other food in plenty.—(*Report on Transportation, 1833, Appendix.*)

children.' But nothing of any effect was done, and the *Hobart Town Times*, writing some thirty years afterwards, charged the Government that it had 'in no one instance, on no single occasion, ever punished, or threatened to punish, the acknowledged murderers.'

But these diabolical deeds, which cried to Heaven and before man in vain for vengeance, aroused the spirit even of the docile aborigines. All the early visitors to Tasmania, before the stigma of crime had been cast over the island and bloodshed had become its lot, were in unanimous agreement that the natives were mild, harmless, and stupid. Their character now became changed by provocation. As the whites had attacked them, so they now attacked the whites; but whereas the bushrangers had been mainly instrumental in inflicting cruelties on them, they retaliated on the free settlers and the emancipists, who seem seldom to have subjected them to harm without provocation. The settlers were easier to attack than the bushrangers, and many of their homes were rendered desolate: the husband would be taken unawares and speared as he pursued his lonely work in the fields; or more often in his absence his wife would be outraged and then murdered, her child perhaps being first dashed to pieces against the wall before her eyes. If defence was attempted, it was easy for the natives to fire the wooden hut, and thus to give their prey the choice of death by fire or at their hands. And sometimes the captives were preserved awhile for barbaric tortures. . . .

In six years there were one hundred and twenty-one outrages by the blacks in one district. There could be but one result of such conditions—a racial war. The infant press of the colony called loudly for vengeance against the blacks: 'Let them have enough of redcoats and bullet fare,' said one journal; 'for every man they murder hunt them down and drop ten of them. This is our specific; try it.' And another newspaper demanded that the Government should remove

the natives : ' If not,' it threatened, ' they will be hunted down like wild beasts and destroyed.'

The work began. The colony had hitherto been ruled by men who were always weak and incapable, and sometimes immoral; but on its administrative separation from New South Wales in 1824 a new governor arrived, of stern and decisive character. During the twelve years that Colonel George Arthur remained in Van Diemen's Land the worst of the disorders were quelled, and after his departure the settlers no longer feared the attacks of the aborigines, for there were none left in the island to fear. Arthur's first intention was to have given up the whole of one district to the natives; but he discovered 'such a spirit of dissension among the tribes'—who hated and distrusted each other only less than the whites—that that solution seemed impossible. A proclamation of 1828, forbidding them to come into the settled middle and eastern parts of the island, naturally proved fruitless, for the natives could not read, and no Englishman understood their tongue; but even had communication been possible, the aborigines would hardly have stayed quietly in the land of morass, swamp, and scrub which was assigned them in the west—a land so poor that it is still practically uninhabited to-day. No hunting grounds existed in that desolate district to delight the savage soul and provide food for the savage body; yet the more fertile parts were in the hands of the invaders, and they were determined to hold them.

A few months later martial law was proclaimed. Search parties were organised: £5 reward was offered for the capture of an adult native, and £2 for a child; and in addition a pictorial proclamation was displayed prominently on trees in different parts of the island, representing the tribes which led peaceable lives receiving food from the English, and those which set themselves at enmity with the invader being shot and

The Black
War,
1828-33.

hanged. Its failure was as absolute as its written predecessor.

From 1st November 1828 until 24th October 1833 martial law continued. But the isolated search parties had little success, and a new scheme became necessary. A great line was formed of all the available men in the colony, which was intended to drive the whole body of the natives before it into the Tasman peninsula, and thus to free the mainland permanently from their depredations. An incongruous crowd assembled to take part in the operations: soldiers, free settlers, emancipists, and Hobart clerks and traders appeared; and they were joined by the convicts, who, after some misgivings, were allowed for the nonce to appear as citizen soldiers. But the aborigines knew the secrets of the bush far better than even the oldest settler, and evaded the beaters for human game: and when the campaign ended in failure the resources of the Government seemed at an end. It was suggested, indeed, that Maories should be imported from New Zealand to track them down, but Arthur refused. The line had already cost some £30,000 directly, and as much again indirectly. It had captured but one solitary native; yet when the settlers returned to their homes they discovered that advantage had been taken of their absence to murder their families, to burn their homes, and to steal their flocks and crops.

The aborigines, too, had suffered cruelly in the chase: they had been forced to slay their children lest a chance cry should betray the presence of the camp; they
The Conciliator, 1835. knew that the resources of the white man, which had been so powerfully displayed, must be effective in the end. The way was open for a conciliator, and a conciliator appeared.

One George A. Robinson, a rough but resolute man, a Wesleyan settler who had preached to the convicts, and who in addition had contrived to learn some of the native dialects, now came forward and offered to persuade the blacks to

submit. The Government accepted him, albeit with some incredulity as to the efficacy of his method, and he started on his mission.

The task was not an easy one. He was none too highly paid; and he had to penetrate the dense interior of the island, often knee-deep in snow, always in personal danger. The natives frequently distrusted him, and not without apparent reason: for even when he had at last induced a tribe to follow him to Bruni Island, the settlement was an utter failure. The rations served out by the Government were scanty and of poor quality; many of the black women were abducted or outraged by the white whalers who put in there, and strife and disease were thereby introduced; and some of the natives made their escape after a brief experience of the place. And the later settlements that were formed, first at Swan Island and then at Gun Carriage Island in the Bass Straits, proved unsuccessful: not until Flinders Island was decided upon did the tribes find a permanent home.

But Robinson had by then succeeded in his mission as conciliator, and earned the gratitude of every colonist. On 22nd January 1835 the last of the natives left Van Diemen's Land, and henceforth the settlers slept and worked in peace.

The end is quickly told. The numbers of the blacks had greatly diminished since the war. 'Thousands,' said a local journal in 1836, 'were hunted down like wild beasts'; on at least one occasion a large number had been caught in a natural rocky trap and killed, the brains of the women and children being dashed out, women far gone in pregnancy being shot, and every man put to death without quarter. It is believed that there were some sixteen hundred aborigines in Tasmania¹ at its first settlement by the British in 1803; in 1837 only about three hundred were left, with some

¹ The number has been placed as high as twenty thousand by some writers. But most trustworthy accounts agree that this is an absurd exaggeration.

two or three remote wanderers whom Robinson had not discovered.

Now, however, that the two races were finally separated, the English endeavoured to redeem their previous cruelty by kindness to the remainder of the tribes. Under the charge of the conciliator, the native settlement in Flinders Island was equipped with stone cottages, schools, and a church. A body of native police was instituted; the blacks were taught the use of money and of morals, neither of which commodities had troubled them before; they were instructed and examined in the Christian Scriptures; they were even encouraged, it is said, to run a weekly newspaper, that the last benefit of civilisation might not be denied them. And by an extraordinary whim of their guardians their names were changed in the most ridiculous fashion: Kangaroo Billy was henceforth known as Nimrod, Blind Poll as Agnes, and others masked as Ajax, Hannibal, Tipu Sahib, Cleopatra, and Queen Elizabeth.

But the doubtful benefits of an alien civilisation had been forced down their throats with too lavish a hand; our heavy kindness was as fatal as our intentional severity.

**The Last of
the Natives,
1876.**

'The only drawback on the establishment,' admitted Robinson grimly, 'was the great mortality'; the medicine might have cured the disease, in fact, had it not first killed the patients.¹ The whole system was too artificial, and the settlement drooped and dwindled. The working of a law practically universal among wild creatures was again demonstrated; few children were born in captivity, and fewer survived. In 1844, when the natives were removed back to the mainland, they numbered but forty-four; yet even near their old homes they did not prosper. Seven years later there were only three men, eleven women,

¹ The same indecent haste to anticipate their teachers in the promised joys of paradise was noticed among the Christian converts in New Zealand and several of the Pacific Islands. See bk. xx. ch. i. and bk. xxi. ch. iii.

and two boys left of the aborigines. They were now neglected by the Government: 'We had souls in Flinders,' a half-caste complained to Bonwick when he visited them, 'but we have none here.' Finally, in February 1869, the last male died; and in 1876 the last woman. The whole race had been exterminated in seventy-three years.

But after 1835 the aborigines had troubled the English in Van Diemen's Land no more, and in the meantime the colony had prospered. Arthur sternly repressed the bushrangers—a hundred and three were executed in two years—and he allotted the convicts who were still being sent over to labour for the free settlers, or to carry out the great public works, of road-making, of building bridges and public offices, which were one of the main features of his policy. In this he followed Macquarie of New South Wales; but he did not imitate that governor in showing favour to the emancipists.

Transportation to Van Diemen's Land abolished, 1856.

Those who came after Arthur, however, were far from being as successful. Sir John Franklin, who was to immortalise his name in the Arctic a few years later, was a mild and humane governor, altogether unable to cope with the rough criminal material of the island.¹ There were many disputes between him and the settlers, which were not abated when rash speculation brought on a commercial crisis; and when to this were added the difficulties consequent on a sudden increase in transportation—fifteen thousand convicts arrived in four years, and free immigration at once came almost to a standstill—Franklin exclaimed despairingly: 'Good Heavens! What a position is that of a governor here! He is like a man sitting on a limekiln, he has no time to get cool.' In 1843 he was replaced by Sir Eardley Wilmot; but the discontent and disagreements did not diminish. Wilmot was hastily recalled by the British Government; but he refused to resign his post, since his dismissal was due to a baseless

¹ For Franklin's life, see vol. iii. bk. x. ch. i.

accusation against his private character. The wrong thus inadvertently done to a blameless and high-minded gentleman was recognised too late ; in February 1847 Wilmot died prematurely. Grief had preyed on his mind, and hastened, if not actually caused, his end.

The whole root of the troubles lay in the transportation system, which blocked the way for anything but material progress. Arthur had founded schools, and Franklin had hoped to expand these into a general scheme of higher education. He corresponded with Arnold of Rugby on the subject, and on 6th November 1840 the foundation stone of Christ's College, New Norfolk, was laid. Its aim was 'to train up Christian youth in the faith as well as the learning of Christian gentlemen' ; but a grim commentary was provided on the excellent aspiration when it was discovered that the coins and inscription deposited under the foundation stone had been stolen on the very night of the ceremony. The institution never prospered, and it came to an end a few years later. Again, there could be no freedom of speech when the convicts—who, as Wakefield said of them in Australia, were all rebels at heart—were in the majority : for some time no newspaper was allowed to be published without a license, and in 1828 a regulating Act was put in force.

There were continual agitations on the part of the settlers for constitutional government ; but that was likewise out of the question when crime was in the ascendant. Arthur was forced to repudiate the idea of representative institutions being possible in 1831 ; but the cry was again raised under Wilmot, without effect.¹ The fact that freedom was out of

¹ A similar agitation had been raised in New South Wales from time to time ; and a memorial from the free settlers of that colony was presented to Governor Brisbane praying for representative institutions. The memorial contains the astounding claim that the inhabitants of New South Wales excelled the people of all other colonies in good morals.

The incident is related in the *Reminiscences of Governor Brisbane*, a work privately printed in 1860, and an example of the very worst style of biographical flattery.

the question while transportation continued was in itself an all-sufficient condemnation of that system ; but the Imperial Government was far from seeing it in that light. ' Van Diemen's Land was founded for the express purpose of receiving convicts,' wrote Earl Grey ; and ' to prefer a claim when it has been brought into the condition in which it is best suited for receiving them, seems to me to be . . . altogether unreasonable.'

The agitation here, however, as in New South Wales, was eventually of effect. A change of party at Westminster brought the opportunity for a change of policy in the southern island. On 29th December 1853 an Order in Council was made abolishing transportation to Van Diemen's Land : in the same year a constitution was granted that was received with gratitude, albeit with some misgivings, since it conferred the vote on emancipists as well as free settlers ; and shortly afterwards, on a petition from the colony, the name was changed from Van Diemen's Land to Tasmania, to mark the new and better era which had dawned.

'The penal settlement at Norfolk Island,' said Judge Burton on one awful occasion when he probed its iniquity to the bottom, was ' a cage full of unclean birds, full of crimes against God and man, murders and blasphemies and all uncleanness.' The scum of Eng-

Norfolk
Island,
1788-1856.

land was sent to Australia ; the scum of that scum, the superlatively wicked and the fiendishly depraved, was sent on to Norfolk Island. Were the story told in full it would stain the printed page ; even a bare summary is a pollution.

Norfolk Island, naturally fair and fertile, with its attendant isles of Nepean and Phillip and a cluster of still smaller islets, was discovered by Cook in 1774. The group possessed no harbour, and the two landing-places that were found on Norfolk Island were both dangerous. It seemed thus an ideal place for a penal station. Access was difficult : escape appeared impossible. In 1788, the same year that the

Australian mainland was first settled by the British, a party of twenty-four convicts was sent to Norfolk Island. Within a few months a plot to seize the lieutenant-governor and the officials was frustrated : but a peculiar difficulty arose when some of the prisoners declared that their sentences had expired, for the authorities had no documents to disprove the claim.

A graver problem soon menaced the community. The island was indeed fertile : but the stores had run short before the first crops were in, and famine threatened. A ship soon arrived from New South Wales ; but its coming only intensified the crisis, for it carried twenty-three more convicts and brought no supplies.

It was believed at Sydney that Norfolk Island possessed fish and vegetables enough to feed the whole community, and Sydney was, in any case, almost as near starvation as the islanders. But there was 'discord and strife in every person's countenance, and in every corner and hole of the island, which . . . was an exact emblem of the infernal regions.' Such was the lieutenant-governor's report, and it was true. In 1794 a mutiny of the soldiers broke out, and six years later the Irish who had been transported in the rebellion of 1798 gave considerable trouble. But though cultivation now flourished so well in the island that it was able to export its produce to the mainland, the British Government suddenly decided to abandon it in a despatch dated 30th December 1806.

Some free settlers had been established there since the first colonisation, and so great had grown their affection for the place that they 'determined not to remove without compulsion.' They were, however, forced to leave their homes for Van Diemen's Land, where they named their new abodes Norfolk Plains and New Norfolk in affectionate remembrance. 'Years after,' said the annalist of Tasmania, 'they spoke of the change with regret and sadness.' The convicts likewise

were gradually removed : on 28th February 1814 the island was completely abandoned.

Ten years later, on 22nd July 1824, a despatch arrived at Sydney from London ordering its reoccupation. This time none but convicts were sent thither, and those only of the worst type. Between 1825 and 1843 there arrived from New South Wales 2916 felons. Of these, 1892 were sent back on indulgence to Sydney, 29 were returned to take their trial for offences committed on the island, 191 died, 5 were murdered, 19 were executed, 17 were killed while resisting lawful authority, 2 committed suicide, and 49 succeeded in making their escape.

Such are the bald statistics of a place which had become so foul that it might have been spued out of hell itself. There was neither priest nor parson on the island. There existed neither church nor schoolroom, library nor meeting-house. The name of God was never heard save as an oath. Petty sessions were held twice a week—in a community of some five hundred men—and still crime was rampant. A mutinous and murderous spirit abounded. There were no women on the island, and unnatural vice, in the language of a studiously moderate report by two Quaker gentlemen, was extremely prevalent.¹

At length the foul pit was uncovered. An insurrection took place in 1827, and again in 1834 : and on the latter occasion Judge Burton was sent from New South Wales to try the one hundred and thirty prisoners. He discovered, to quote his own words, ‘ a picture of depravity which no human judge ever had revealed to him before.’ As the terrible tale of sin was poured out by the prisoners themselves, Burton involuntarily sympathised with the felons whose degradation was partly caused by the evil system under which they lived. One man observed, in a manner which drew tears from his eyes and wrung his heart when he

¹ The report is in manuscript, and it is so terrible a document that I hope it will never be printed.

was placed before him for sentence : ' Let a man be what he will, when he comes here he is soon as bad as the rest ; a man's heart is taken from him, and there is given to him the heart of a beast.' And the words were but too true. ' It was no mercy,' said another, ' to send us to this place ; I do not ask life, I do not want to be spared, on condition of remaining here ; life is not worth living on such terms.' A third averred that ' he was transported for an offence of which he was not guilty ; he was again unjustly convicted ; and he committed the present offence to get clear of this accursed place.'

Now the judge was a humane Christian as well as a stern disciplinarian : and though their guilt was proved, the prisoners were reprieved until they could be given some religious instruction. Burton felt it impossible to hurry them out of the world with their sins unconfessed and unrepented : and a clergyman and the hangman arrived in the same boat.

There is no need to prolong a loathsome story. The settlement improved for a time, but it eventually reverted to its former state of discontent and immorality. Nothing could cleanse that sink of vice : and in 1856 the penal colony was broken up. Since that time Norfolk Island has been inhabited by the descendants of the Pitcairn Islanders, and by the Melanesian mission of St. Barnabas : and the simple virtues of the former, combined with the religious mercy which the latter show to a dying native race, have done something to obliterate the evil memories of the past.¹

The first and the only systematic attempt to colonise Queensland with convicts was made under Governor Brisbane : but the north-eastern province of Australia never
Moreton Bay
 (Queensland), became such a centre of transportation as Sydney
 1823-42.
 and Van Diemen's Land, nor was the evil system there persisted in so long.

¹ I have drawn a veil over the worst side of the Norfolk Island disorders. I have no belief in history that glosses over the truth ; but neither have I any desire to make my readers sick.

For the Pitcairn Islanders, see bk. xx. ch. i.

Moreton Bay ¹ had been discovered by Captain Cook, and called by him after the earl of that name in 1770. But though others followed the circumnavigator's track along that difficult coast, no colony existed there till after the survey made by Lieutenant Oxley in 1823 : in that year, on his recommendation, a convict settlement was planted at Redcliffe Point, a place now known as Humpybong—a native expression signifying ' the dead houses.' The spot was found unsuitable almost at once, mainly owing to the lack of water ; and the colony was removed further up the river Brisbane, near to the site of the present capital. There it remained some years. Only confirmed criminals, and such as were too turbulent to be kept at Sydney, were sent to the Moreton Bay plantation : there were naturally many disorders, and stern discipline had to be maintained at the place—so stern, indeed, that, according to one observer, ' the simple became idiotic and the active mad.' In 1831 the population was estimated at 1241, of whom 1066 were convicts and 40 were women. A few years later the Darling Downs, some hundred miles distant from Brisbane, began to attract the attention of the free settlers of New South Wales ; and in deference to their wishes, the criminal garrison at Moreton Bay was gradually reduced. By 1842 the last vestige of the penal station had disappeared.

In another of the Australian colonies, a curious chain of circumstances made transportation bear for a time an altogether different aspect. The eastern settlements hated the system, loathed the convicts, and detested the Government which imported such human refuse : West Australia welcomed them, appealed for their continuance, and protested vigorously when it was proposed to cease sending such unsavoury cargoes to her virgin soil.

West
Australia,
1825-68.

¹ It was originally spelt Morton, the Scottish earl of that name having been President of the Royal Society at the time. The fact that the bay is now spelt Moreton seems to identify it, incorrectly of course, with the English family of Moreton.

The first English settlement of all in West Australia was formed purely as a convict station. In 1825, there being at that time some rumour that the French intended to take possession of the magnificent harbour of King George's Sound, the authorities at Sydney followed a well-established precedent, and sent thither a party of seventy-five convicts, with the necessary number of soldiers to guard those guardians of British interests in a new land. From the same fear of a French occupation had sprung the original stations in Port Phillip, in Van Diemen's Land, and at Moreton Bay. But the new colony, which was located at Albany, did not prosper, and it was expensive to maintain withal; in 1829 it was abandoned, and the inhabitants repatriated to Sydney.

A little later, a free settlement was planted there: and it likewise was quickly in difficulties.¹ Faultily planned and badly managed as the new colony was, the price of labour was exorbitantly high. Yet without labour there could be no permanence or prosperity in the place; and so serious did the situation appear in 1849 that the colonists appealed to England for a supply of convicts. In such matters the mother country was ever ready to assist her offspring, although in regard to her children's freedom of action she lagged at times something behind the pace desired. Already the youthful criminals of Great Britain had been transported to West Australia as indentured labourers: but from the year 1850 a regular traffic in gaol-birds was instituted to Albany. In the succeeding five years there were transported to West Australia at the British Government's expense 3661 convicts, and but 2310 free immigrants with 1476 military pensioners, including their families.

The old disorders inevitably recurred; but it is unnecessary to tell again a story rendered wearisome by repetition. The main features of transportation were the same, whether in

¹ In the prospectus of this settlement (*Hints on Emigration to Swan River*, 1829) much was made of the fact that there were no convicts in West Australia.

New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, or West Australia : the felons were always insubordinate to their masters, unsatisfactory in their labour, and cruel to the aborigines. But with all their disadvantages, their forced and unsatisfactory labour was better than none at all. The Westralians would not hear of any cessation of transportation ; and when the system was stopped in the other colonies, there was, reported the Governor, 'one universal feeling of alarm and despair' at Albany, lest the order of 1853 abolishing transportation should apply to West Australia as well. Meetings were held, memorials drawn up, and the Imperial Government petitioned : it was believed on all hands that the colony would be wrecked without a continual supply of forced labour.¹

The settlers were soon reassured, and some years longer the tide of crime continued to flow steadily into King George's Sound. But the system was extremely unpopular in the eastern colonies, for it still besmirched the good name of Australia among people in Europe, who did not yet distinguish very accurately between the various provinces of the southern continent. A continual agitation for its abolition was maintained, in which Victoria took the lead : the mother country was warned that, if transportation was persisted in, the attachment of the colonies to Great Britain would be weakened, and that its continuance was 'universally regarded as an act of oppression and injustice.' The Victorians even suggested that no communication, either postal or commercial, should be held with the offending penal settlement ; and though so extreme a proposal was rejected by the good sense of the other states, it at last moved the British Government

¹ The actual results of the system were pithily summarised by a special correspondent of the Melbourne *Argus* in 1865. He reported that by the use of convicts 'several merchants had made little fortunes ; the settlers had lived comfortably, and improved and extended their properties ; and the bulk of the free labourers had disappeared'—driven out by cheap convict labour. As to the reformation of the criminals, 'it is so hopeless to expect our sins to be forgiven that few tried to be really industrious and good.' He remarks, however, that the more enterprising convicts left the colony when their sentences expired. There were better opportunities for their trade elsewhere.

to act, in spite of its own ingrained ideas and the wishes of the Westralians.

In 1865 it was announced from the Colonial Office that transportation would cease altogether, 'a just consideration for the interests, the feelings, and the deep convictions of the Australian communities in general (having) weighed most materially in bringing Her Majesty's Government to this conclusion.' In 1867 the last transport ship left Great Britain for Australia.

So ended the system of transportation to the Australian colonies. It had been in force eighty years, and had been tried in New South Wales, in Tasmania, in West Australia, and for a short time in Queensland; an attempt had been made to introduce it in Victoria, but had failed. In South Australia likewise it had gained no footing.

Wherever it had been tried, it was found that it had not succeeded in reforming the criminal; but the fact that convict labour, although unsatisfactory, was cheap, had to a very large extent kept free men away, by reducing both wages and opportunities of employment. The transportation system was thus doubly condemned. It had turned a colony into a prison; it had not turned that prison into a free colony.

The total number of convicted criminals transported from the United Kingdom to Australia was:—

To New South Wales, from 1788 to 1839: 51,082 males and 8706 females.

To Van Diemen's Land, from 1803 to 1853: 56,042 males and 11,613 females.

To West Australia, from 1853 to 1868: 9718 males.

The complete total of convicts from first to last was thus 137,161.

CHAPTER II

THE FREE SETTLERS : 1821-59¹

DURING the eleven years in which Macquarie governed New South Wales it was his settled principle to discourage colonisation by free men ; and the British authorities of the time apparently shared his views, since they prohibited the emigration thither of anybody not possessed of sufficient means to establish himself in the antipodes. The two governors who succeeded Macquarie, however, reversed in some degree his policy of favouring the emancipists ; but it was not until the first generation of the English in Australia was beginning to give place to the second that any active measures were taken to secure free immigration on a large scale.

In the year 1819, indeed, the Imperial Parliament decided to encourage free settlement in the antipodes ; and Governor Brisbane, whose taste for science and exploration bore fruit in the extension of knowledge and the discovery of the north-east and interior of Australia, granted many licences to squatters, pastoralists, and stock-breeders in the interior. But the population did not increase to any considerable extent ; and on the departure of Darling in 1831 the whites still numbered only 51,155 all told.

The Growth
of Popula-
tion.

¹ Authorities.—Mainly as before, with Macarthur's *New South Wales* and Mudie's *Felonry in New South Wales* ; the former a strenuous opponent of the emancipists, the latter so violent an enemy of Governor Bourke that he reverses the Scriptural command, and visits the sins of the son—whose gallantries apparently caused some scandal—upon his father's head. Wentworth's *New South Wales* may be consulted, as also the account by Flanagan. An amusing and generally correct picture of the colonial life of the time is given in Henderson's *Excursions and Adventures*, and the slighter *Notes and Sketches* by Mrs. Charles Meredith. There is a valuable summary of the industrial history of the colony in the official *Wealth and Progress of New South Wales* by T. A. Coghlan.

The aims of the Australian Patriotic Association are outlined in Bland's *Letters* to Charles Buller. *Fifty Years of Australian History*, by Sir Henry Parkes, is excessively egotistical but often valuable. The constitutional development of the colonies is discussed in bk. xix. ch. iii.

Nine years later, however, transportation to New South Wales was abolished ; and the necessity of obtaining labour to replace the supply of convicts at once led to energetic steps being taken to secure the immigration of free men. By 1846 the colony had more than trebled its numbers, and a census then made showed 114,769 males and 74,840 females within its boundaries. Of these, 63,534 had been born there ; 1507 were foreigners ; the remainder had come from the United Kingdom. Some 9000 were engaged in commerce, trade, and manufactures ; 19,000 in grazing ; 900 in horticulture. Agriculture claimed 13,900, and 22,800 were labourers, mechanics, or artificers.

Two facts emerge prominently from these figures. Bond or free, Australia was overwhelmingly British : the virtues **Its** and the vices of the mother country were not **Character.** adulterated or improved by the admixture of any appreciable alien element, nor did the latter in fact increase in future years, thanks partly to the isolation of the island continent, but mainly to the stringent preventive legislation which was adopted in all the antipodean states. And there was growing up a large colonial-born British population, to whom the British Isles were as much the antipodes as Australia had been to their fathers.

The young British Australians already displayed some specialised characteristics of their own, the first divergent tendencies that were to make the Australian nation of the future. They were taller and slighter in build than the parent stock, better horsemen, and better shots than the British youth at home ; ¹ but although children brought over from the mother country were known as ' sterling,' and those of colonial birth as ' currency '—a depreciatory Australian slang term borrowed from the debased money of the day—there

¹ Half-a-century later Professor Gregory records that he was assured it was possible to recognise men who had been born and brought up on the Australian plains by their receding eyes, which the fierce glare of the sun had caused. The same feature was remarked among the aborigines.

was already a strong feeling of affection for the nascent southern people in the hearts of its younger citizens. There were no more lamentations over the supposed sterility of the soil or the dreariness of exile; a generation that knew England but by name loved Australia as a home.

But if Australia was now a home, and not a place of enforced banishment for a third of its inhabitants, England remained the ideal. In spite of the child who, we are told, dreaded Britain as the land where everybody was a thief—a not unnatural deduction in transportation days—the manners and customs of Australia were modelled on those of the older country. Sydney, said a disappointed traveller in 1850, was ‘too much like home; excepting a few verandahs, and the lofty and stately Norfolk Island pine, it coincides much with a second or third-class town in England.’ And the whole tone of society, wrote Mrs. Charles Meredith, ‘was conducted in as English a manner as can be obtained’; even the press of the colony, according to her malicious wit, resembled the *Eatonswill Gazette*. There was at the time much justice in her remark; but in this respect matters rapidly improved, at least as regards the journals published in the capitals. It was indeed one of the minor compensations for the unfortunate tendency of the population to congregate in great towns, that the newspapers obtained more power, and eventually used it more worthily in shaping and leading public opinion than could have been the case had they remained precarious and petty ventures, each appealing only to a very limited circle.

The wealthy emancipist rode in his carriage through the better streets of Sydney, in conscious imitation of fashionable London society, albeit his jewellery was often
The Ex-Convicts.
 excessive and his linen none too clean. His lady dispensed a generous if vulgar hospitality, and exchanged the gossip and scandal of the province with her visitors; and both, since riches had brought them comparative respecta-

bility, strove to forget the untoward circumstances surrounding their emigration. Luxury and display were the passports in such circles rather than manners: ostentation took the place of culture, and arrogance of breeding. The sudden rise to wealth of a section of the emancipists, and the fact that those who had so risen were still excluded from the society of the free settlers, produced some disturbing but not unamusing results. The free settler frowned on the emancipist; the emancipist scowled at the free settler; and the official society of the capital gyrated uneasily between the two. . . .

It is impossible to withhold a certain amused admiration from the convicts who redeemed their earlier lapses, and **The Felonry** became plaster pillars of the State. But those **die out.** who did so were not numerous; and when the tide of incoming crime was once diverted, the majority of the older felons died off gradually, leaving little permanent mark on the colony.

Ten years after transportation had ceased to West Australia, two-thirds of the convicts were maintained in the poorhouse at the public expense: and though they were both more in number and took deeper root in New South Wales and Tasmania, few of them rose to any prominent position, or founded notable families.¹ The debased, degenerate, and frequently diseased stock from which they sprang is not the stuff of which new nations are built: the real develop-

¹ I may repeat here the remark made in the Preface of this book, that I have examined the genealogies of very many Australians who have played a prominent part in the exploration of the continent and its industrial or political development. In no single case has the enquiry revealed a convict origin—a fact that speaks for itself.

In many instances in subsequent pages I have definitely stated the date of arrival in Australia, and the antecedent social condition or occupation of distinguished men and their ancestors, following in this respect the practice adopted in earlier chapters of this book; but even where these details are omitted the ancestry has been honourable.

I hope that this clear statement may do something to destroy a prevalent error which has been encouraged by lazy writers who have not troubled to test gossip and rumour by the necessarily rather laborious examination of facts.

ment of Australia was accomplished by its free immigrants.

But it was many years before the ordinary Briton overcame his natural dislike of emigrating to a country so far from home, and already containing so disreputable a population. The first drawback to Australian settlement was a permanent one; but it was somewhat modified year by year as communication between the two lands became more frequent and regular, even in the days of sailing vessels. And the fact that Australia possessed a large number of criminals was compensated in some minds by the knowledge that their labour was gratuitous; it was perhaps overlooked for the moment that such labour was necessarily unsatisfactory. Free immigration into Australia from the mother country was therefore never altogether at a standstill; there were always more people arriving in New South Wales than leaving it. Some men with capital found their way thither from time to time because they saw fair opportunities in a new land, but the majority of the poorer immigrants were necessarily assisted by the Government in their passage. Population was essential if Australia was to advance: but since the natural tendency of emigration from Great Britain and Ireland was still to the United States, it became needful to offer special inducements to divert the human tide to the antipodes.

Generous terms had indeed been granted to free settlers in the first years of the colony. But Governor Macquarie practically put an end to their immigration, in his desire to make Australia a home for none but emancipists: and it was not until 1832 that an immigration fund was created in New South Wales, the money assigned for the purpose being the £10,000 raised from the land sales of the previous year. The sum of £8 was advanced from the colonial revenue to every female coming out, that being calculated as half the cost of the passage;

The Free
Settlers.

Assisted
Immigra-
tion.

the balance was paid by the immigrant herself. Preference was given to married women who emigrated with their families; but the system was subsequently extended to mechanics and agricultural labourers. Four years later, other and more substantial bounties were offered: £30 was granted to a married mechanic or farm-servant and his wife, the age of neither being over thirty years: an additional £5 was paid for each of their children over twelve months old. An unmarried woman between fifteen and thirty years of age was allowed £15; an unmarried mechanic or male farm-servant between eighteen and twenty-five years received £10.

Emigration commissioners were appointed later to proceed to England to diffuse information as to Australia: and although the great manufacturers and the prosperous middle classes of Britain generally gave but little attention to the movement—John Bright, for example, refused to assist Sir Henry Parkes¹ who was one of the commissioners, in any

¹ Sir Henry Parkes, one of the most notable political figures in nineteenth-century Australia, was the son of a Warwickshire farmer. Born in 1815, he emigrated at the age of twenty-four, and during his early years in Sydney he had a hard struggle to make his way. He was first engaged in an iron store, then in a foundry; subsequently he started business on his own account as a dealer in ivory, then as a toy merchant, and lastly he tempted fortune by founding a newspaper—an employment of which it has been cruelly said that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. In the case of Parkes, however, it was the road to success. The press led to politics; he entered the New South Wales Parliament in 1854, and took office as Colonial Secretary in 1866. Becoming Premier of the State five years later, he had already professed his belief in Australian union (see bk. xix. ch. iii.), and it is as the real leader of the federal cause at a time when it was extremely unpopular and provincial feeling ran high that Parkes will be remembered. A rugged and outspoken personality by nature, his early struggles had not made him less tolerant of opposition, and he frequently gave offence to his political enemies, a fact for which he cared not a jot. He did not live to see federation accomplished, but its ultimate triumph was practically assured when he died in 1896.

An unkindly but not untruthful critic describing Parkes as a speaker declared that the 'inane and tedious vulgarity of the rhetoric, appalling aspirates dropped and added in every sentence, the hideous grammatical and prosodial blunders seemed the fitting expression of an egotism as empty as oppressive' (Adams, *The Australians*). But Parkes was no worse than many of his colleagues in the rather coarse public life of the day; he was only more conspicuous.

way—they drew crowded audiences among the poor, both in the large towns and the agricultural districts at home. ‘If I could have given free passages,’ said Parkes, ‘I might have sent out ten thousand emigrants.’

Even under the conditions imposed, however, assisted immigration answered so well, and resulted in so substantial an increment in population, that the system remained in force, albeit with many changes in detail as the requirements of the colony varied, until 1888, when the inhabitants of New South Wales numbered a million: and similar regulations were made by the other Australian colonies from time to time with results as satisfactory.

Those who were thus assisted to emigrate from Britain were men of every type. They included the southdown cottager, slow of speech but strong of limb, and the factory labourer from the black country, quick at his trade and wiry of constitution; the Irish peasant, religious, mystical, and poetic; and the Scottish crofter, shrewd but superstitious. The small Yorkshire farmer, whose broad accent betrayed his county at every syllable, met his fellow from Kent for the first time on the vessel that was to bear both to the antipodes; and the long voyage together taught them no longer to look on each other as ‘foreigners.’

**The True
Founders of
Australia.**

It was by such men, and from such diverse materials, that the real foundations of the new southern nation were laid.

The map of early Australia, like that of early America, quickly bore traces of the original homes of its pioneer settlers. There are the counties of Argyll, Roxburgh, and Durham in New South Wales—certain marks of the sturdy north-country and Scottish blood that was covering the bush and scrub of the mother colony with homesteads and sheep-stations. West Australia, the Cinderella of the antipodes, has her Wicklow, Stirling, Lanark, Sussex, and Kent to prove that each of the three British kingdoms gave of their sons to that

once unfortunate dependency ; and her capital of Perth—the first important city in the outer world to receive a Scottish name—again shows the growth of Scottish influence in the antipodes. Among Queensland's earliest divisions were Warwick and Aberdeen, and within a few years Ayrshire was added ; Somerset lives again in South Australia with Frome and Taunton. Victoria has her Anglesey and Belfast, while the Ripon of that modern state recalls the ancient cathedral city of the Yorkshire dales, even as the Exeter of Tasmania brings to mind the 'ever-faithful city' of the red mound in old Devon.

The convict slur was thus obliterated. The transported felons died out ; and the regular influx of free settlers overwhelmed the old forces of crime and disorder, even as in earlier days the few free settlers had themselves been overwhelmed by the continual arrival of fresh shiploads of prisoners.

The true genesis of the southern British people took place when the assisted immigration of free Britons from the north became an accomplished fact ; the previous era of transportation appears now but as the false pains of the prolonged labour which preceded the birth of a nation.

The advance of Australia was henceforth rapid, if at times irregular. Less than three-quarters of a century had elapsed since the first white settlement of the antipodes ; but already in 1859, within twenty years after transportation to New South Wales had been abolished, the island continent was divided into the five states that the map distinguishes to-day. The mother colony was curtailed by the creation of Victoria in 1851, and of Queensland in 1859 ; and West and South Australia had by then been established nearly a generation—the former menaced by grave political and economic difficulties, the latter prosperous and happy after its early struggles. And many of the problems that were to agitate the future Commonwealth were already beginning to present themselves. The conflict of the squatter with the small farmer had begun

The bushranger, the aboriginal 'blackfellow,' and the sun-downer—the antipodean equivalent of the English tramp—troubled both alike. The population had shown a regrettable tendency to congregate in the towns; and there the 'remittance man'—the English ne'er-do-well whose relatives remitted him a monthly allowance on condition that he remained in indefinite exile—was a conspicuous and unwelcome figure.

The squatter was essentially an aristocrat: the small farmer was naturally a democrat. The two frequently sprang from different classes in Great Britain; the different conditions under which they lived in the colony did not tend to bridge the distinction.

The
Squatters.

The earliest squatters of all, indeed—the men from whom the term derived—were generally rogues, escaped or time-expired convicts who wandered beyond the pale of settlement round the coast, and occupied or squatted upon the unclaimed districts of the interior with cattle, horses, or sheep which they had raided on their way. They had no more right to the Crown Lands up-country than to the stock they had stolen; but escape was easy and pursuit difficult. The Government was not strong enough to put down the abuse; and so late as 1840 the 'nefarious practices' of these lawless gangs were the subject of an official enquiry. But such men did as little for the industry as for the morals of Australia. Fundamentally they were but one degree removed from the bushrangers, the regular cattle-thieves, and the horse-fakers who infested New South Wales; their security, such as it was, sprang from the weakness of the administration; and they necessarily died out as civilisation advanced.

A better class of settler, however, had appeared at the same time, of whom the first and perhaps the greatest was John Macarthur: and from these the great squatter aristocracy was evolved. They were frequently retired naval or military officers who had been stationed some years in

Australia. They were generally men of good family; they mostly possessed private resources which they employed, sometimes unsuccessfully, in stock and sheep-breeding, and it was often the case that their experience in the services, while it had not qualified them to shine either in agricultural life or in commercial pursuits, had yet rather increased their inborn contempt for the trading and farming classes, and made them extremely impatient of any competition or encroachment on the somewhat extensive conception they possessed of their political or territorial rights.¹

Holding his lands of the Crown at a nominal grazing rent until they should be required for other purposes, a prosperous squatter's domain might extend over thousands of acres; and as the closer settlement of farm and township spread inland from the coast, he had ever to move further into the interior for fresh pastures. The squatter was thus the chief forerunner of civilisation in the wilderness, the immediate successor of the pioneer explorer of a virgin soil; and it would be difficult to exaggerate the usefulness of his work. The great grass countries of the southern continent lay open for pasturage, serving excellently for sheep and, in a less degree, for cattle: the squatter appeared with his flocks and herds, and occupied them.

He led a strange, lonely life in a silent land. A few retainers to guard the station and the flocks—woolcombers, shearers, and sheep-drivers, a rough but hardy class of men of every social rank and of none: such were the sole companions of

¹ See, for instance, Bowen, *Thirty Years of Colonial Government*, in which he remarked that many of the settlers in Queensland—the colony he knew most intimately—were 'retired officers of the army and navy, weary of the routine of a mess-room or ward-room, or Oxford and Cambridge men preferring an adventurous life in the open, and other gentlemen of birth and education.' Every Australian colony had a sprinkling of such settlers.

In the *Journal of the Society of Arts* for 1866, it is stated that, among the well-known English families that had already sent cadets to Australia were the Wordsworths, Coleridges, Broughams, Faradays, Dickenss, Gladstones, and Arnolds of Rugby.

the squatter and his family in the solitude of the bush. The form of society, as in all pastoral communities, was patriarchal: the squatter ruled his family and his men with rough discipline and often with private laws of his own making.

Often, however, he lived altogether alone, especially if unmarried when he left England. There were comparatively few women in the colony; of those few, the virtue of the many who had been transported was precarious. And the squatter might well prefer utter solitude to the society of a decayed beauty from the London pavements, who would only be true to him because she could find no neighbouring beau in the bush with whom to play false.

But the lack of women was necessarily a serious social drawback. Not only was the population less numerically progressive than it should have been, but manners grew rough without them, and homesteads frequently were little better than hovels. It was well for the settler if in his loneliness he did not take rum for his bride, and become careless both of his appearance and his comfort. 'With hundreds of cattle,' said Henderson, 'he has no butter, cheese, and very often no milk. With a rich soil, he has no garden, nor any vegetable or fruit to drive away the scurvy. With grain, he has no poultry; with a gun, he has no game; with hooks, he has no fish. His hut with its bark roof and earthen floor is a hotbed of vermin; a paling or a couple of hurdles are in front of the door to sun the blankets on,' and thereby diminish their minor parasitic inhabitants.

The picture of monotonous discomfort was probably somewhat overcoloured; many of the squatters' homes were surrounded by plantations, and trees were often imported for that purpose at considerable expense from Europe, while if business prospered the first rough shanty would in a few years be replaced by a substantial and comfortably furnished house. But the rougher stations in the remote up-country

were generally primitive in the extreme. Pioneers in the wilderness have seldom either time or inclination for the accessories of civilisation ; and when a nation is in the making its raw edges are apt to grate on sensitive nerves. Such carelessness for appearances was, however, not confined to the more distant settlers : a lady who has left some lively sketches of life in New South Wales at this time has recorded her disgust at the neglected and wretched aspect of the huts of the lower classes near Sydney, around which were strewn on an ash-heap ' broken bottles, old casks, old rags, bones, and shoes.' A certain genius for disorder is seemingly as inherent in young nations as in young children. . . .

The profits of the squatter were occasionally large, but always uncertain. A dry season diminished them ; a drought—the periodic curse of Australia—frequently wiped out both profits and capital alike, and life had to be begun again with a loan from the bank. ' The slow, pitiless, everlasting horror of a drought means ten years added to the life of the squatter or manager,' said an Australian writer of the time ; ' after a good spell of it, endured on a diet of mutton, bread, jam, and stewed tea '—a diet which at once loathed the appetite and ruined the stomach—' one's indifference to life becomes all but complete. There is nothing wild or hysterical about it ; it is only a profound and passionate heedlessness of danger and death. Life being mostly a curse, it is no use pretending it is anything else. But it is only the coward who whines.'¹

Nor was a drought the only obstacle to success. A disaster

¹ This thought is frequently met with among Australian writers. See, for instance, the *Sydney Bulletin*, 13th April 1911 : ' Australia is the hardest, kindest, cruellest, and most beneficent country. The real Australian, not the little Australian-born person of the cities, is the best type of man on earth because he survives its recurrent and brutal unkindnesses. The great Australian quality is resilience. Its men are capable of enduring to the verge of collapse and then recovering without effort. A country destined by its climate and its sunlight to produce people of Latin temperament, a country that must sing and write verse, and must paint and make statues, simply because the joy of life is strong, and craves expression.'

such as occurred on Black Thursday—6th February 1851—brought ruin to all within hundreds of miles, and death to many. On that day, at the close of an unusually dry summer, the parched Victorian bush caught fire, and the flames devoured everything—forest, pasture, horses, sheep, cattle, the stations, and several of the men on them. The burnt leaves fell in Melbourne, and some of the ashes were even carried by the wind across the straits to Tasmania; there was no staying the fire, which only ceased when incalculable damage had been done to the rising colony.

At other times, though the sheep were fat and the wool was good, there might be no market for either. Transit to Europe was difficult, expensive, and irregular; the processes of refrigerating and chilling the carcasses were unknown. And the few Australian townships were stocked to repletion; meat was practically free to anybody for the asking, and five shillings was a fair price for a dozen legs of mutton in times of glut. When thousands of sheep were thus worth but a few uncertain pounds sterling, the exigencies of the times introduced the tallow value.

Sheep which should have been worth thirty shillings had sunk in 1842 to eighteenpence; but one settler reflected that the fleece alone must fetch from half-a-crown to three shillings in England, while the tallow in each animal would likewise be worth from three to four shillings more. The minimum value of each sheep, therefore, rose necessarily to some six shillings; and forthwith hundreds of flocks were slaughtered, and the carcasses boiled down. The wool and tallow were sold; the flesh, soup, or gravy from the vats was thrown away to irrigate the land—which in the following season, it is said, bore splendid crops as the result of its strange fertiliser. But henceforth the price of a sheep could never sink below its tallow value. One of the most serious drawbacks to the squatter's profits thus vanished; although he could still be beggared by a drought, or ruined and rendered

homeless by a bush fire, he could always obtain a minimum price for his sheep in ordinary seasons, even when there was no market for his meat.

But great fortunes were seldom made by the squatters until some years later, when the Australian urban population had grown larger, and a quick steamship service with cold storage facilities had rendered it possible to send meat direct to Europe. It was then that the hospitality of the Australian squatter became as profuse and generous as that of the Virginian or West Indian planter had been. Hunts and balls were organised ; the scattered population of the bush were entertained to dancing and feasting ; the whole family were taken to Sydney or Melbourne on a round of enjoyment. The sons would be sent to England to complete their education ; the daughters perhaps might accompany the father on a tour round the world when business called him to London.

In their efforts to obtain labour to develop their estates when transportation had ceased, the squatters had turned to India and the Pacific Isles for kulis ;¹ when **The Small Farmers.** that source was prohibited, they employed large numbers of the British immigrants who had been assisted to come over. But the latter were laudably ambitious to become proprietors themselves ; and from being the employees of the squatter they became his foes, as they discovered that the road to fortune was already blocked by their master, and that in many cases it was almost impossible for the small farmer to obtain possession of the land, even in that country of illimitable acres.

The squatters had followed the tracks of the explorer to the grass lands, or they had even been the pioneer explorers themselves :² the small farmers followed the squatters. But the latter were already in possession of the larger available part of the country. In the Port Phillip district they had within a few years divided up practically the whole sub-

¹ See bk. xx. ch. iii., and bk. xxii.

² See bk. xix ch. i.

province into sheep-raising stations, save what seemed the hopelessly barren mallee scrub of the Wimmera; in New South Wales their sheep and stock runs stretched a hundred miles inland to Bathurst; in South Australia, though that colony was only founded in 1835, a similar process was taking place; in New Zealand again it was to be repeated some years subsequently.

But if the squatters were only temporary occupiers of the soil under a license terminable by Government, their rivals who wished to become small farmers had not at first even that right. The squatters, too, were powerful, both as large employers and as men of great possessions; in 1846 they owned in the then undivided colony of New South Wales 1,345,973 head of cattle and 6,190,914 sheep. The new arrivals, on the other hand, had generally but very limited capital, and no other resources beyond that except their own labour.

The struggle, therefore, seemed an unequal one; but it was carried from the bush to the legislature, and from the legislature back to the bush. The gradual advance of the small farmer against the squatter was a sign that the future of Australia was democratic and not aristocratic; but the many details of the prolonged fight, which was not near its end even when the twentieth century dawned, must be postponed to a later chapter.¹

The struggle did not prevent the general advance of New South Wales. New industries were introduced year by year. The vine, which had been first planted at Kirton in the Hunter River district in 1828, with cuttings brought from Europe, flourished from the beginning; and wine soon took its place among the regular products of Australia. Sugar was likewise grown; in 1864 two acres of land in County Bath and on the banks of the Macleay River were sown with that crop; and it proved so profitable that the area under cultivation rapidly extended. Tobacco

Advance of
New South
Wales.

¹ See bk. xxii.

was less successful. The settlers had indeed no difficulty in growing the divine herb ; but its quality was poor, and they were as yet unskilled in the tedious and difficult art of preparing it for consumption.

Additional industries thus added to the prosperity of New South Wales ; the business facilities of the colony developed equally with its industries. The first Australian bank was opened on 8th April 1817, five years after Lord Liverpool had vetoed its formation as unnecessary. Others followed within a short time, and in 1832 a savings bank was instituted. The postal service, though still expensive and inadequate, was gradually improving ; but the carriage of a letter in the colony cost anything from a penny to a shilling, according to weight and distance ; and the charge for a single package by the overland mail to Adelaide was eighteenpence. There were only four post-offices in the whole colony of New South Wales, whose area then included Victoria and Queensland ; but four years after the discovery of gold in 1851 the number had risen to 155. There was a post to Melbourne three times a week, and a nominal monthly service to England ; but in 1857 the postmaster-general admitted that the mail contract was 'an utter failure, so far as the stipulated time-table might be taken as a criterion.' Its speed and regularity, however, astonished the older settlers : men who remembered a period when it took two years to obtain an answer from England would hardly grumble if the fifty-eight days allowed between Southampton and Sydney was exceeded from time to time.

Yet the prosperity of New South Wales was far from being unalloyed. A prolonged drought in 1827 caused great losses of live stock, extraordinary fluctuations in prices, and general insecurity ; a decade later, in 1838 and 1839, the crops failed altogether, while the harvest of 1840 was again poor. The price of wool also fell heavily in those years ; and this,

Drought,
Speculation,
and
the Crisis
of 1842.

combined with the speculation that had been previously indulged in, induced the great financial crisis of 1842.

It is indeed good for a young colony to have unlimited confidence in the future. But when it proceeds to trade upon that future instead of more solid assets, and credit becomes as unlimited as confidence, danger is not far distant. And seldom has living been more extravagant, or speculation more reckless, than it was in New South Wales in the years immediately preceding 1842. 'Every one who had a few acres of scrubby land near the coast, or by a creek or river,' says a writer of the time, 'forthwith dubbed it a town. A magnificent plan, laid out in squares and streets, and abounding in churches and other public buildings, was exhibited, and the allotments put up to public sale (were) greedily bought.'¹ An anecdote is preserved of a man who began business in Sydney with a capital of £40, and failed in six months for about £12,000. He fled to Hongkong, and so engrained was roguery in his nature that 'he tried to steal the horse and saddle on which he rode down to the quay.' An isolated case proves nothing; but in the six months and four days from 1st February—when a new insolvency law was passed—to 4th August 1842, there were 392 bankruptcies; while in the following twenty-three months no fewer than 1135 persons were declared insolvent.

It seemed for a time that everybody was in debt, and that everybody was being sold up. Business was at a standstill, and there were so many forfeited estates that few of them realised much. Valuable horses fetched only £3; cattle sometimes went for 7s. 6d.; and a sheep was hardly worth more than sixpence.

Some extraordinary changes of fortune were witnessed as the colony appeared to come daily nearer ruin. The thrifty

¹ Possibly one of the contributory causes of this mania for speculation was the fact that transportation had recently ceased, and free settlers were coming over in large numbers.

servant bought his master's estate, and perhaps engaged his former employer as station-manager; 'an old military officer,' wrote Henderson, was 'reduced to let himself out for hire as a bullock driver; a shepherd suing his master for £25 obtained the whole flock he had been tending, which in former times would have fetched from £500 to £1000.' The schooling was hard, but it was effectual; the years of depression which followed purged New South Wales of much of that insensate gambling in real estate which inevitably results in a financial catastrophe. The gold fever ten years later prepared the way for another but smaller reaction; but the settlers were henceforth not so ready to run ahead of the sun.¹

The colony did not completely recover from the disaster until the discovery of gold in 1851 brought a fresh wave of prosperity; but about that time occurred two other events of profound significance. On 3rd July 1850 the first sod of the first Australian railway was cut; and two years later, on 31st July 1852, the first steamship made its way up Sydney Harbour. The new system of transit, thus peacefully inaugurated for Australia by the turning of a lump of earth and the churning of a paddle-wheel on the harbour waters of the capital, was as truly the mark of a new era for the antipodes as any sanguinary battlefield had ever been for the older world.

The knot of isolation was unravelled; the pulse of quick and regular communication began to beat.

¹ A similar mad folly of speculation in real estate led to a similar but even more serious financial crisis in 1893. The colony weathered the storm; but thousands of men were ruined, and several banks had to close their doors and suspend payment.

CHAPTER III

THE FIVE COLONIES; 1821-68¹

TAINTED and diseased as it was at its first sowing, the seed of empire which the British had thrown upon the waters of the southern ocean had borne fruit after its kind. The healthier products of the next generation spread far and wide in Australia, and the vitality of the parent tree was proved by the sturdy vigour of its branches. Within fifty years of her own inauspicious birth, New South Wales had become a mother of fresh colonies, and though each of the five Australian states and Tasmania had many serious difficulties to encounter, there was not one in which the settlement did not prove permanent and eventually prosperous.

¹ Authorities.—Rusden is the main guide for early West Australia, but there are many letters from early settlers there in the London press of the period. There are several good accounts of the founding of Port Phillip; the fullest is Labilliere's *Early History of Victoria*, complete and painstaking. Stillinglaw's *Historical Records of Port Phillip* may also be consulted, and M'Combie's *History*. Westgarth's *Colony of Victoria* is specially valuable for the growing industries of the settlement.

For South Australia, in addition to Rusden, the official account of the colony by Marcus is useful; and Hodder's *History*, with his life of G. F. Angas. The pamphlets on the subject of South Australia, published between 1830 and 1850, and collected in the London Guildhall Library, and in the Royal Colonial Institute, possess considerable interest. Wakefield's *Art of Colonisation* must be studied in detail. His life has been written by Garnett, and in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. The *Life of Sir George Grey*, by G. C. Henderson, supersedes the earlier superficial sketches of his career. The *Life of Sturt*, by Mrs. Sturt, gives the anti-Grey side of South Australian opinion.

For Queensland, Coote's *History*, distinctly above the average of early colonial writers; *Queensland, Its Resources and Institutions* (1886), an official account which contains much information as to industrial history; and H. S. Russell's *Genesis of Queensland*,—rambling and discursive, but interesting. The *Queenslander* newspaper is also of great value.

The files of the London *Globe* newspaper for several years contain a large amount of original information concerning Australia. Its editor and proprietor, Colonel Torrens, was one of the chief promoters of Australian settlement, and inserted many letters from colonists in his periodical.

The eldest born of the children of New South Wales—one may disregard the wretched abortion of Norfolk Island—was Van Diemen's Land ; but the visage of Caliban was not more evil and forbidding than are the records of that settlement in its earlier years. And the second colony established on the mainland, while its infamy was far less pronounced than that of the island, was still less successful in a material sense for many years than Van Diemen's Land. To write the dreary history of West Australia, declared Rusden with picturesque exaggeration, was like scraping the bones of the dead.

The first penal settlement at King George's Sound in 1825 failed miserably ; the free immigrants who followed four years later were not more prosperous. The place began, indeed, under happier auspices ; the colony which was destined to be the last Australian province to receive convicts was the first that was founded on a free basis. No criminals were allowed to enter, and the land was allotted to the free immigrants in the proportion of forty acres to every three pounds invested by them. The fee simple of their grants was given when they had improved the plots at the rate of eighteenpence an acre ; otherwise the land itself was to be forfeited to the Government. The conditions sounded attractive, and by the end of 1830 West Australia had over a thousand inhabitants.

But disappointments and misfortunes—most of which should have been foreseen and provided against by better plans of settlement—dogged the colony almost from the beginning. The proprietors had vast estates, but they could do nothing with them, for no labour was available. They had no produce to sell ; and even if they had had, there was no market at which to sell it, and no roads along which to transport it. The city of Perth indeed existed—it had been founded on 12th August 1829 with a minor station at the mouth of the river that later grew into Fremantle—but both were as yet, and remained

for many years to come, mere skeletons. Capital dwindled day by day, and such labourers as there were seized the first opportunity that presented itself to quit a blighted land.¹

The whole situation in West Australia was well summarised by Colonel Torrens, when speaking at Exeter Hall, London, in 1834 on behalf of the then newly-formed South Australian Association. 'Numerous grants were made,' he said, 'at the Swan River settlement. A single individual had 50,000 acres; one person, I believe, had 500,000. These immense tracts separated the people, so that they could not communicate at all. They were so severed that, instead of being able to assist each other, though they were famishing, they could not pass through the unreclaimed lands to tell their state of destitution. Capital was sent there, but it was unproductive. Labourers were sent there; some of these died from want, and the others went to Van Diemen's Land. Out of 4000 people, only 1500 remain.' And many more deserted the place within the next decade, for the misfortunes of the colony were not yet at an end.

Wheat was at length raised from an arid and ungrateful soil; but in 1840 practically the whole crop was destroyed by moth. In that year the total revenue deficit of the colony

¹ An account of the colony before it reached this desperate pitch is given in a letter from a settler, dated November 1829, and printed in the *London Globe* for 20th May 1830. 'The appearance of the settlement on landing,' he wrote, 'is most forbidding. The soil is entirely sand, which produces a great variety of plants and herbs, very curious to the eye of the naturalist, but of little use to the agriculturist. (But) even the first crop will make very tolerable hay; when properly cultivated there is little doubt the crops will be very abundant. The climate is delightfully mild and serene, so that you may live entirely out of doors. We met with some very good land in exploring up the Canning River; plenty of birds in every direction; a black swan made a capital stew. At the landing-place is a horrid set of thieves, sailors, and others, who have nothing to do but get drunk. The natives hitherto have kept quite aloof. Cabbages and radishes grow famously; stock can be bought here cheaper than in England. I think the proposed town of Fremantle will be given up. At Perth all the great officers of state live in huts of a rude structure, merely branches of trees stuck into the ground and covered with canvas. The Governor has a wooden house nearly ready.'

amounted to £235,098, which there was no means of paying, and the burden of which eventually fell on the British Treasury. Five years later the Governor truly said that if the creditors had been foreign claimants 'nothing would have saved the community from general bankruptcy.' In July 1849 public dissatisfaction found vent in a general meeting which declared that 'the distressed circumstances of the settlers, the continued high rate of shepherd's wages, and the low price of wool made it impossible for the stockholders to continue paying the present exorbitant and ruinous charge for depasturing licenses.'

To the other troubles of the colony were now added a guerilla warfare with the aborigines. Already in 1830 a native had been killed for the attempted robbery of a settler; the blacks retaliated by murdering a white, and the feud continued. 'Damn the rascals, I'll show you how we treat them in Van Diemen's Land,' cried a farmer once as he shot at an innocent man; the exclamation showed the spirit in which the whites were prepared to act, and several serious conflicts took place. These did not differ materially from encounters in the other colonies; but the Westralians were far less able to stand the strain of a native war than the more prosperous settlers in the east.

Some in despair suggested the total abandonment of the colony; many, in fact, continued to desert so unpromising a **Transporta-** land. A temporary solution of the labour question **tion, 1849-68.** was discovered when the British Government acceded to the colony's request for convict labour in 1849; and about the same time an official party began to explore the interior and the coast in the hope of discovering a more fertile soil. Earl Grey, indeed, denounced the expedition from the Colonial Office in London, probably fearing it would prove but an additional expense for the Imperial Treasury without advantaging the dependency: but the party nevertheless set out and travelled with some success.

It was already known that magnificent tracts covered with sandal and jarra wood slept undisturbed in their native forests for want of a market: but elsewhere good pasture land was found at Champion Bay; Industrial Progress. a coal mine was discovered on the Murray River, copper and lead ore on the Murchison, guano on an island in Sharks Bay, and pearl fisheries in the same neighbourhood. But for the rest, little appeared save vast stretches of sand, varied by salt lakes, salt beds, and thickets. Gold ore in small quantities was indeed found in 1848, and elsewhere on the Bowes River in the Murchison District six years later; but another generation was to elapse before any deposits large enough to be worth working were discovered. Occasional excitement was caused, and false hopes were raised, by the reports of precious metals in various parts of the colony; but a general survey in 1862 revealed little of any value.

Gradually, however, the resources of the settlement were developed, and its population no longer shrank. The wheat area extended slowly. A small vineyard was planted at Hamilton Hill in 1832. Two years afterwards the first wool was exported; in 1844 horses were sold to India; the next year a shipment of sandalwood was made. A smelting furnace was founded in 1852, and the first lead was exported a few months later.

But such steps forward were puny in comparison with the giant strides made by the eastern states; and for many years to come West Australia remained a despised half-sister of the younger, richer, and more successful colonies that were growing up at Port Phillip, Adelaide, and Brisbane.

By a happy blindness on the part of its first visitors the future colony of Victoria was spared the evils of transportation. A party of two hundred and ninety-nine male and sixteen female convicts had been sent Port Phillip, 1803-28. to Port Phillip—so called after Governor Phillip of New South Wales—from Sydney in 1803 under charge of Lieu-

tenant Collins ; but though the surveyor reported that ' the country in general was excellent pasture,' Collins soon abandoned it for Tasmania. The water supply was bad ; and in his opinion there were too many insects and reptiles in the place to make it habitable.

A second attempt was made on 4th December 1826, when another body of convicts and sailors was landed at Port Phillip from Sydney. Claim was now laid to the district, in order to frustrate a possible French invasion that was feared : but once again the deficient water supply caused the removal of the settlers from Port Western to Geelong, and finally their withdrawal altogether early in 1828. There were no further endeavours to plant criminals on the soil of Australia Felix. When one realises the grave disorders that must inevitably have occurred had the discovery of gold in 1851 taken place in the midst of a criminal population, one is almost inclined to echo the earlier annalists of the colony, who ascribed their immunity from the convict slur to the intervening hand of a special Providence.

But it was stated by one of those who formed the second expedition of 1826 that ' nothing could surpass the beauty of the situation or the fertility of the soil ' ; and already the fame of the place was being bruited abroad. A few sealers and the black women they had kidnapped or bought from the aborigines alone occupied the port ; yet others were by now ready to try their fortunes in a land so fair.

John Batman, an Australian of Yorkshire descent, who had been born at Parramatta in 1800, possesses the proud title of **John Bat-** the founder of the colony of Victoria. Physically **man, 1800-39.** and morally strong and rugged, the family of Batman had carried the strict Methodism of the sternly religious northern dales to their far home under the southern cross ; but the harshness that sometimes characterises the straiter Nonconformist sects was absent from John Batman. For some years in Van Diemen's Land he was one of the most

active in tracking the bushrangers and natives that terrorised the island : yet his kindness of heart, especially towards the aborigines whom he captured, was soon proverbial ; his wife, for whom a constant tenderness peeps out in his letters and diaries, was a girl refugee whom he discovered in the Tasmanian forests, and whom pity perhaps as much as love prompted him to marry ; while creeks, bays, and headlands that he passed on his wanderings to and fro were named after his children.

Of a roving disposition—at one time he had entertained the idea of a trans-Australian expedition—the project of a settlement on the southern shores of the continent seems to have been in Batman's thoughts for some years. In 1827 he joined with a Tasmanian lawyer, Gellibrand, in applying to the Government for a grant of land at Port Western : it was refused, and Batman thus suffered the first of a long series of discouraging repulses from the official world.

He delayed, but did not abandon his scheme ; and after many difficulties had been overcome, eight years later he sailed with a few friends and servants from Launceston for Port Phillip on a journey of discovery and settlement. Arriving there, probably on 26th or 29th May 1835, he quickly found that rumour had not exaggerated the natural resources of the country. On every page of his notebook is the recurring entry, ' Very good sheep land,' as he explored further and further into the interior ; in most parts it was ' as rich land as ever I saw, with scarce a tree upon it, the grass above our ankles.' He was enchanted, for ' the whole appeared like land laid out in farms for some hundred years back ' ; and this Nature had done unaided, for the few natives he met were too ignorant to cultivate the fertile soil. The absence of water had wrecked the expeditions of 1803 and 1826 ; but by ordering ' one of the men to make a hole with a stick in a damp place,' Batman quickly obtained ' a plentiful supply

of good, soft, beautiful and clear water,' and presently he discovered a river.

Here, then, was the ideal place for a pastoral colony such as he sought to establish : and on the map which Batman constructed he noted, with the unerring eye of the pioneer prospector, ' the place for a village.' Some years afterwards, when the magnificent city of Melbourne rose on the site, the prediction was more than justified.

John Batman had seen too much of wanton cruelty to the Tasmanian natives not to be studiously careful in his dealings with the aboriginal inhabitants of the mainland. The opening scene in the British settlement of Van Diemen's Land was the unprovoked attack by a gang of soldiers and convicts on a body of curious but not unfriendly natives ; the free colonisation of Australia Felix opened more auspiciously with a solemn covenant between white and black. The presumed heads of the tribes that were supposed to be possessors of the district were discovered, and a treaty with them was executed on 6th June 1835, by which the soil, to the amount of ' 500,000 more or less acres ' in one district, and ' 100,000 acres more or less ' in another, was bought for ' the yearly rent or tribute of 100 pairs of blankets, 100 knives, 100 tomahawks, 50 suits of clothing, 50 looking-glasses, 50 pairs scissors and 5 tons of flour ' for each of the two allotments. Much good-humoured ridicule was cast on the terms of the treaty by Batman's old acquaintances in Tasmania : the British Government flatly refused to recognise its validity, on the ground that all unoccupied lands in Australia belonged to the Crown, and not to the natives at all : the aborigines probably did not understand, although they do not seem ever to have wished to repudiate, the contract ; but at least it was an honest attempt on Batman's part to regularise his position in Port Phillip, and as such perhaps not less entitled to respect than the calm ignoring of native rights upon which the Imperial Colonial Office insisted.

Possibly not altogether displeased with the idea of founding a city to be called after him Batmania, the adventurer returned within a few months to Tasmania, leaving as settlers some of his friends and servants in token of possession. But during this period, when the colony apparently as yet contained no more than the personal adherents of one man, the latter discovered to their amazement that they were not the only white inhabitants. An Englishman of gigantic stature, William Buckley by name, had escaped into the bush from the unfortunate penal expedition of 1803; and, being pitied or perhaps admired by the natives, he had made his home among them during thirty-two years. On his rediscovery, he had forgotten the use of his mother tongue; even when association with the new settlers brought the long unaccustomed accents again to his lips, he was silent and reserved concerning his strange experiences among the savages. As a convict, he was still liable to punishment for desertion; but in consideration of the exceptional nature of his case, the Government gave him a free pardon, and he lived quietly among the whites for the remainder of his days.

But meanwhile the Port Phillip Association, as Batman's venture was called, had encountered so many unexpected difficulties that it was at length overwhelmed. There was some uncertainty at first whether the new colony came under the jurisdiction of New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land; and when that point was settled in favour of the former, the settlers' title to the soil was pronounced irregular. The Imperial Government repudiated the treaty with the aborigines; according to British common law and immemorial observance the land belonged to the Crown and not to the natives, and therefore Batman and his fellows must acquire it from the Crown.

The Port
Phillip
Association
dissolved,
1837.

The British Colonial Secretary at that time was Charles Grant, Lord Glenelg. Rarely has even the Colonial Office

been under a weaker man ; his very friends could only praise him for a philanthropist, while his enemies openly derided him as a fool. He vetoed an extension of dominion in South Africa ; he opposed a similar extension in New Zealand ; his vacillation in the Canadian crisis of 1837 was condemned on all sides :¹ and when the Port Phillip question was referred to him he gave another characteristic exhibition of ineptitude. His point of view is shown by a despatch dated 23rd January 1836. 'All schemes for making settlements,' he wrote, 'by private individuals or companies in the unlocated districts of Australia have of late years been discouraged by His Majesty's Government, as leading to fresh establishments, involving the mother country in an indefinite expense, and exposing both the natives and the new settlers to many dangers and calamities.' A later official paper admitted that, although the Port Phillip settlement might 'in the end be advantageous,' it would form 'a most inconvenient precedent'; and finally Governor Bourke was instructed 'to discourage any projects of the like kind.' The Port Phillip Association appealed against Glenelg's decision, on the ground that the promoters were men of character and substance ; but although the Colonial Secretary admitted the hardness of their case, he was too fearful of infringing the unwritten law of precedent to permit any exception to the official rule. His narrow, timid mind could not grasp the fact that official regulations were made for the Empire, and not the Empire for official regulations.

The Association was therefore necessarily dissolved : but the adventurers did not quit the country they had occupied. After further thought, Glenelg grudgingly permitted them to remain, on condition that they purchased from the Crown their right to the land they had discovered, and submitted them-

¹ See vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iv. for Glenelg's action in Canada. For his opposition to the colonisation of New Zealand, bk. xxi. ch. ii.; and for his disastrous action in South Africa, vol. vi. bks. xxiii. and xxiv.

selves to the authority of New South Wales. This decision was perforce accepted ; and in March 1838 Governor Bourke, who had proclaimed the settlers trespassers in a proclamation of 26th August 1835, arrived in the bay to inspect his new province.

A county was named in his honour ; and at his suggestion, the proposed capital, which at that time consisted of but a few primitive huts and drinking saloons, was called after the British Premier, Melbourne. Evidently well satisfied as to the prospects of the district, Bourke did not wish it to be separated from his own province of New South Wales ; he recommended that a lieutenant-governor should be appointed to administer Port Phillip under the control of the Sydney authorities.

The City of
Melbourne
founded,
1836.

That step was taken : and some months after Bourke's departure, a superintendent arrived at Melbourne equipped with the power of a lieutenant-governor. On his reception by the settlers he told them in manly words that ' it will not be by individual aggrandisement, by the possession of numerous flocks and herds or of costly acres, that we shall secure for the country enduring prosperity and happiness, but by the acquisition and maintenance of sound religious and moral institutions, without which no country can become truly great.' But the moral institutions which he rightly recommended were hardly compatible with the suzerainty exercised by a convict colony over a free state : and already an agitation had been set on foot for complete separation.

The original opposition of the Government at Sydney to the Port Phillip settlers had not made for cordial relations ; and apart from the transportation question, the great distance of the colony from the capital of New South Wales, and the tedious and occasionally dangerous voyage thither—for a regular overland route was not yet practicable—would in any case have predisposed the younger colony to separation. Its people had few common interests and no mutual

sympathies with Sydney ; and when in 1843 they were granted the right of electing six members to the New South Wales Legislature, which had just been established, the absurdity became too apparent to be of long continuance. There was no leisured class in Port Phillip that could afford the luxury of representing its fellows at Sydney ; even had there been, the six members would have been in a permanent minority. Mock elections were therefore held at Melbourne, and the whole procedure was reduced to a farce when leading members of the British Imperial Parliament were nominated and duly elected to sit as the representatives of Port Phillip in the Legislature of New South Wales.

The agitation continued till 1st July 1851, when it attained success. On that day, Port Phillip, which had hitherto been officially known as the southern district of New South Wales, was created an independent colony under the name of Victoria : and henceforth the jealousy of Sydney was an incentive to progress rather than a handicap. Unhappily Batman, the original founder of the settlement, had not lived to see its success. Some of his fellow-adventurers in the defunct Port Phillip Association were by now prosperous, if not wealthy ; but the Batman family had been hit by a series of misfortunes, from which it never recovered. Its possessions had vanished, its members had died prematurely, its very name was almost forgotten : and others, whose ambitious imagination ran away with their veracity, laid claim to the title of father of the colony—a claim that was at once clearly disproved by the combined evidence of documents and local tradition.

Port Phillip was thus the daughter of Tasmania ; the neighbour colony of South Australia, which was founded almost simultaneously, sprang directly from England : and both its inception and its original character were due solely to one man.

Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the extent of whose influence on British colonial history it would be difficult to exaggerate, was a Londoner by birth. His career began inauspiciously enough with two runaway marriages, the second of which caused some scandal. The invalidity of a ceremony performed at Gretna Green was questioned and maintained; what Wakefield called an elopement the law stigmatised as seduction, and he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. His release was the signal for a book on the legal penalties of the age, in which he set forth the old truism, then still unrecognised by English jurists, that certainty and not severity of punishment was the true deterrent of crime.

Edward
Gibbon
Wakefield,
1796-1862.

But Wakefield had other work to do than reforming the chaotic English criminal law. It seems likely that while still in prison he had contemplated the possible advisability of emigration at the expiry of his sentence; but his thoughts soon went further than his own personal advantage.

He saw that a large proportion of the English working classes were without work, without resources, existing from hand to mouth, from day to day, from year to year, in misery and want. Continuous commercial depression had brought wages down; the amount of available work had not greatly increased: yet the population of Britain was growing steadily, there was a large surplus of labour, and the 'Condition of England Question,' as Carlyle called it, had long been a serious one.¹

His Theory
of Colonisa-
tion.

Wakefield believed that a way out from the poverty and overcrowding at home² might be found in the potential

¹ In Paisley, for instance, a typical industrial town, 11,000 people out of 44,000 were out of work; and many hundreds of those in work only earned miserable wages of a few shillings a week.

² Britain was not, of course, actually a poor country in the aggregate, nor was its population half as large in Wakefield's time as fifty years later; but the wealth was unevenly distributed, and the industrial basis of the country thoroughly insecure. I doubt if Wakefield realised this; at least there is no sign of it in his writings or speeches.

wealth and emptiness of the British colonies abroad. He laid it down as an axiom that 'Colonisation is a natural means of seeking relief from the worst of our social ills, and of thus averting formidable political dangers. My fancy pictures,' he wrote, 'a sort and amount of colonisation that would amply repay its cost, by providing happily for our redundant people; by improving the state of those who remained at home; by supplying us largely with food and the raw materials of manufacture; and by gratifying our best feelings of national pride, through the extension over unoccupied parts of the earth of a nationality truly British in language, religion, laws, institutions, and attachment to our Empire.'

Nevertheless colonisation, as Wakefield candidly admitted, had often failed in its aim. He saw and deplored the misfortunes of West Australia and the criminal taint of New South Wales; and it became his dream, and that of those whom he interested in his project, to found another antipodean colony on a more stable and more honourable basis. The causes that ruined the Swan River settlement were clearly discerned by Colonel Torrens, one of the chief associates of Wakefield; the new theory of colonisation sought to avoid those pitfalls altogether.

He determined that in all cases the land must be sold to the settler at a fair and reasonable value,¹ a regulation which

¹ The enemies of Wakefield declared that he paid no attention to native rights to the land; and he was often accused of unjust dealings in this respect by the Christian missionaries, particularly in New Zealand. Missionaries as a body are rather apt to bring charges against other white men without due inquiry or sufficient evidence, although no doubt there is often much reason in their condemnation of the white man's dealings with the coloured. And unhappily in New Zealand the record of the missionaries themselves was not altogether blameless. See bk. xxi. ch. ii.

But while Wakefield was very astute, he was not a robber. He purchased the title to the land from the natives wherever an aboriginal owner could be found with a valid claim; the fact that he or his agents bought land at a very low price and sold it to settlers at a high price only showed that he was a practical man of business as well as a political theorist. It may prove him a speculator; it does not convict him of injustice, far less of theft.

would do away, he believed — incorrectly as the event proved — not only with the huge unproductive estates that had been granted free in West Australia,¹ but also with a lucrative source of patronage to the Colonial Office.² The money thus obtained by the sale of the land was to be used to further the emigration from Britain of respectable labourers and mechanics, whose departure from home would relieve the congested labour market there, and whose presence in the antipodes would hasten the progress of the colony, and furnish themselves with more profitable employment. In addition, it was wisely laid down as a principle that, since ‘an equal emigration of the sexes is one essential condition of the best colonisation,’ no married man should emigrate unless he took with him his wife and family. The colony, too, was never to be a charge on the mother country, but independent from the beginning; it was to contain no convicts or emancipists, and none were to be imported; and there was to be no State Church, although the Church of England was to be

¹ The regulation certainly prevented them from being granted free. But it did not prevent enormous areas of land from falling into individual hands, and being held by absentee owners as a speculation against a possible rise in price, for the simple reason that no limit was put to the amount which any applicant might purchase. The evil consequences of this mistake are written large all over Australian history and land legislation. See bk. xxi. chs. ii. and iii. and bk. xxii.

² Wakefield was a steady enemy of the Colonial Office, which always did its best to thwart his schemes. He was an effective controversialist, however, and was able to cite many damaging cases of misconduct among officials appointed by the Colonial Office. Among others he instanced examples of men who had been appointed to colonial governorships when heavily in debt, and who had to take precautions against being arrested even when swearing the oath of allegiance; he might have added the case of Rawdon Crawley, appointed to the Governorship of Coventry Island in *Vanity Fair*. But there was no need to go to fiction. Wakefield knew of other cases of colonial judges who were heavily in debt, and only saved by their office from being lodged in gaol—a sufficiently Gilbertian situation. One colonial treasurer had been a defaulter; another resigned after he was discovered forging public documents; one fled the country after cheating at cards; another, who was supposed to have the private ear of the Colonial Secretary, was said to swear ‘by the hind leg of the Lamb of God!’ A pretty crew!

asked to send out a bishop, and all religious denominations were to be encouraged.¹

A National Colonisation Society was founded in 1830 to propagate these views; but its aims were balked by the enmity of the Colonial Office and the indifference of the public. For the time the Society failed; but a similar body, entitled the South Australian Association, obtained the support of rising politicians and influential men such as Charles Buller, Grote the historian, and Colonel Torrens. Yet the Bill for a South Australian charter only passed through Parliament with difficulty; had it not been, indeed, for the Duke of Wellington's interest in the measure, it would probably have been blocked successfully. According to Wakefield, 'A Prince of the Blood asked, "Pray, where is this South Australia?" and the Lord Chancellor, renowned for the surpassing extent and variety of his knowledge, answered, "Somewhere near Botany Bay."' The Bill finally passed on 2nd August 1834; and the road was free for colonisation.

But practical work brings many a promising theory to the ground; and the early days of the new settlement in South Australia were hardly more happy than those of West Australia itself had been. The first parties of emigrants arrived towards the end of 1836; and on 20th December of that year Captain Hindmarsh, the Governor, landed in South Australia. Eight days later the

South
Australia,
1836-45.

¹ Wakefield had little belief in the Church of England as an effective force in the colonies, since it was 'subject to the Colonial Office, and therefore devoid of any energy or enterprise.' He was glad enough to obtain its support in the Canterbury Settlement of New Zealand, but by that time the Anglican Church had revived, largely under the stimulating influence of the Oxford Movement. Wakefield rated the Presbyterian Church of Scotland higher than the Episcopal Church of England, but highest of all he classed the Wesleyans, who possessed, he said, 'a profound and minute system of government, and did not wait, as other Churches did, until there was a call for its services in the colonies, and then only exhibit its inefficiency; but it went before settlement, it led colonisation; it sent men of devoted purpose and first-rate ability; it selected its missionaries with as much care as Rome, and ruled them with authority.' There was far more truth than error in these statements at the time.

colony was proclaimed at Glenelg, a watering-place on the Gulf of St. Vincent which had been named after the British Colonial Secretary ; and disputes at once took place as to the location of the capital.

Eventually the original site chosen by the surveyor was decided upon, and the city of Adelaide—named in honour of the queen—was laid out. The promoters had intended to call the new capital Wellington, in gratitude for the assistance which the duke had rendered in passing their Bill through Parliament ; but the idea, said Wakefield, was ‘ shabbily frustrated,’ and that name was given a few years later to the New Zealand city which was thought at the time ‘ most likely to become the metropolis of the south.’

The first buildings of Adelaide were not more imposing than those of any other colonial capital in early days. The Government House, it was said, consisted ‘ of Adelaide. mud put between laths, supported by uprights of native wood, and covered thickly with thatch. . . . Fire-places were forgotten in the plan ; and a simple fireplace and chimney were afterwards put down close to the front door. . . . The architect was a sailor, and the workmen were seamen.’

The city itself was laid out on a rectangular plan, but for years it was little more than an imposing skeleton ; and Port Adelaide lay on a swamp in a creek that needed draining and a million tons of salt cast upon it before the foundations were fit for building.

By the charter of the Association, land was to be sold at twelve shillings an acre, that price being subsequently raised to a pound ; the proceeds were to be spent in Misfortunes and Bankruptcy. emigrating labourers of good character. And in the meantime the commissioners were empowered to borrow £50,000 for emigration purposes until the money from the land sales was in their hands ; in addition, they could raise £200,000 on bonds, which were to be a charge on the colonial revenue. But Wakefield’s theories had been

clipped and modified to conciliate various opposing interests ; the scheme as finally approved had the radical fault that it tended to encourage speculation in land and bloated prices in real estate, one of the worst handicaps a young settlement can possess : and above all, the administration of the colony remained chiefly in the hands of the Colonial Office, which looked on the whole scheme with indifference, if not with actual hostility. The Wakefield project was thus frustrated : its good points were rejected, its faults exaggerated ; and in five years South Australia was on the verge of disaster, a bankrupt state with heavy debts and much social discontent.¹

The soil seemed unpromising, and little effort was made to cultivate it. Produce was imported, and prices were therefore high ; flour was at one time sold in Adelaide for £100 a ton. Labour at first was scarce, and consequently expensive ; it was even suggested by some of the capitalist settlers that convict labour should be imported to supply the want—an idea that was fortunately suppressed. And later, when agriculture still languished but the population increased beyond the resources of the colony, a policy of public works construction was introduced by the Governor to tide over the immediate distress. It succeeded temporarily, but a long price had to be paid for the accommodation.

The inevitable effect of the Government employing surplus labour was that the cost of private labour rose higher than ever, and agriculture was again set back ; while the Governor, having no other resources from which to pay wages—for it is useless to tax a penniless employer to pay a penniless labourer—drew bills on the British Treasury, which were promptly returned dishonoured.

¹ A sensible comment on the Wakefield system was made by D. Monro in the New Zealand *Nelson Examiner*, 1844 : 'Here the same system has been tried. The means of the settlers have been crippled by paying large sums of money for land, and everything at present seems to point to the same consummation as in South Australia—total exhaustion and then health, from necessity and the contact of starvation ; a system like that of Dr. Sangrado, who cured his patients by bleeding.'

Utter disaster was thus within measurable distance when, on 10th May 1841, Captain, afterwards Sir George Grey, walked unannounced into Government House, **Sir George Adelaide**, charged with the duty of superseding **Grey, 1841.** the existing Governor, and rescuing South Australia from its untimely difficulties.

The new Governor, a young man of twenty-nine who had spent the two preceding years in exploring the coasts of West Australia, was destined to be one of the great proconsuls of the age, and to serve the Empire in the southern hemisphere faithfully if not always wisely during forty years. Explorer in West Australia and Governor of South Australia, twice Governor and once Premier of New Zealand, and High Commissioner of South Africa, Sir George Grey had a long and laborious life; a difficult administrator to work with, he had always a difficult part to play, that of an essentially autocratic man charged with the rule of essentially democratic communities. Silent and reserved, a man with few confidants, unhappy in his home life—he was separated from his wife for years, and his only son died when five months old—Grey found his one pleasure in work. His creed was summed up by himself in one of his last speeches as Premier of New Zealand: ‘What we have in this world is like so much stage property lent to us to play our parts with—lent to us to see what good we do with that entrusted to us.’ And Grey had been true to his word, for he had spent his private means liberally in the service of his country.

When his little son died in Australia in 1841 he wrote: ‘The voice within me said—cease grieving for the child, weep not for the child, but rather weep for those who live or are to live. Arouse thee, rise up and struggle to ease the sufferings of the countless millions of thy countrymen who are now here or are to come—to endure the miseries which foolish men have prepared for them in this life.’ The man who could say that was an idealist, yet an idealist who would

not suffer his sorrow to blind him to the practical duties of life.

And the immediate practical duty before him at the moment in South Australia was clear, if neither easy nor likely to be popular. The last two considerations weighed nothing with Grey; he saw that there must be drastic retrenchment in expenditure, that gambling in land must be stopped, and that cultivation and settlement must be encouraged; and he proceeded to act.

Official salaries were at once cut down, and certain posts were suspended or abolished altogether. Duties to provide revenue were imposed on all goods except those imported from the United Kingdom. A searching enquiry was instituted into the Public Works Department, and many abuses were quickly discovered. One man, for instance, who was receiving relief was found to be the owner of four cows. He protested that they were not his property; investigation showed that they nominally belonged to his five-months-old son. In another case, two labourers admitted leaving their employers on the land because 'higher wages could be obtained from the Government in Adelaide, and the work was not so hard.' The evil results of his predecessor's policy were thus exposed, and Grey at once cut down both state employment and the scale of pay for those who were not dismissed. The youthful press of the colony violently denounced the Governor, and his effigy was publicly burnt. But the latter Grey disregarded; the effusions of the former he refused to read.

Slowly the crisis grew less acute, and the colony turned the corner to prosperity. The people were forced out on to the land when state employment in the town was checked, and agriculture began to flourish as labour grew more abundant; it was discovered that with a little care the soil could be made to pay, and that the second crop was larger than the first. The chief business of the settlers ceased to be that of specula-

Economy
and Ultimate
Prosperity,
1841-5.

tion in land ; wheat-growing was encouraged, and industry was found more profitable than gambling. In 1840 there had been but 2503 acres under cultivation ; the number grew steadily year by year, until in 1846 there were 33,292. And the population, which in 1840 had consisted of 14,610, of whom 8439 were congregated in the capital, had in three years risen to 17,366 ; but of these only 6107 remained in Adelaide, and the rest were on the land. ' My great object from the beginning,' said Grey, ' was to give the labourers no inducement to remain in town, or upon public works ; but to make them regard the obtaining a situation with a settler as a most desirable event.'

The statistics speak emphatically of his success ; and the very people who had burnt an effigy of Grey in the streets of Adelaide thanked him publicly on his departure for New Zealand in October 1845. ' You have with great ability,' ran the signed memorial, ' pursued an uniform and difficult course in your administration ; and after years of great labour, and close attention to public affairs, have the satisfaction of quitting your duties here with the assurance that the difficulties which impeded our progress have been overcome, and that prosperity can be confidently predicted and easily secured for the future.' The memorial expressed the simple truth ; but it is characteristic of Grey that, towards the close of his life forty-nine years later, he ascribed the credit for the emergence of South Australia from its early misfortunes to the colonists themselves. ' The calibre of the early settlers there,' he said, ' gave me trust in the new Anglo-Saxondom in the southern hemisphere. . . . There was a worth, a sincerity, a true ring about them, which could not fail of great things.' He did not add that only the born leader could make those qualities fruitful.

One great man had founded South Australia, and another had saved it from disaster ; but no such conspicuous names adorn the early annals of the colony of Queensland. What

was known until 1859 as the Moreton Bay or northern district of New South Wales had indeed been discovered by Cook ; but the approach to the coasts was dangerous—
Queensland (Moreton Bay), 1823-59. Cook himself had been nearly wrecked at Cape Tribulation on his first voyage in 1770, and for thirty years the north-east of Australia was totally neglected. Later a few explorers had added a little knowledge ; but not until after Lieutenant Oxley¹ left Sydney for Moreton Bay on 23rd October 1823 was there any attempt at colonisation. He discovered two half-wild Englishmen, the forlorn and forgotten relics of a former expedition, in the vicinity of the bay ; from these he obtained much dubious information, and after a perfunctory examination of the district he returned to Sydney, and gave premature birth to an exaggerated report. A few months later a convict colony was established, and the rough beginnings of the city of Brisbane were presently seen on the river.

The convicts sent thither were a class of whom even a humanitarian would have despaired ; the habitual criminals, outcasts among their very fellow-criminals at Sydney, were relegated to Moreton Bay, and there kept in strict and absolute isolation from the outer world. During its early years Brisbane was proclaimed a closed town, and free men were forbidden to come within fifty miles of the place.

But the magnificent country of the interior was not to be allowed to lie idle because a thousand convicts were kept in
Allan Cunningham and the Darling Downs, 1827. durance on the coast ; and the spirit of unrest was again calling British explorers to do pioneer work in the unknown wilderness. On 27th April 1827 Allan Cunningham started from New South Wales with a few companions and servants to force his way through the northern bushlands ; and after many hardships bravely borne in crossing desolate and waterless countries, they sighted

¹ For Oxley's previous exploration in the interior see bk. xix. ch. i.

what are now known as the Darling Downs.¹ It was 'exceedingly cheering to my people,' wrote Cunningham, 'after they had traversed a waste, often of the most forbiddingly arid character . . . to observe from a ridge that they were within a day's march of open downs of unknown extent.' A clear pastoral country, with deep ponds supplied by streams from the neighbouring high lands, was discovered; and 'the lower ground thus permanently watered presented flats which furnish an almost inexhaustible range of cattle pasture at all seasons; the grasses and herbage generally exhibiting in the depth of winter an extraordinary luxuriance of growth.' The downs themselves were of 'rich black dry soil, well watered, but beyond the reach of floods,' and all around were hills clothed with the densest underwood.

Cunningham returned to Sydney with the report of so goodly a country, and the tide of settlement soon turned thither; but he and others again followed up the work of exploration. One of the enthusiastic pioneers in the *Beagle*, who named his discovery in the far north the Plains of Promise, breathed a 'prayer that ere long the now level horizon would be broken by a succession of tapering spires rising from many Christian hamlets, and pointing through the calm depths of the intensely blue and gloriously bright skies of imperial Australia to a still calmer and brighter and more glorious region beyond.'

His aspiration for the north of Queensland has yet to be fulfilled: yet within a few years of Allan Cunningham's journey permanent stations had been made on the Darling Downs. In 1840 Patrick Leslie, the first of the great Queensland squatters, appeared in the district; and he was followed by a slow but steady influx of farmers. Two years later the place was opened for free settlement by the Government; in another four years the population of the Moreton Bay district was reckoned at

Slow but
steady
settlement,
1840-50.

¹ The Downs were named from Governor Darling.

1122 males and 477 females, of whom 538 could not read. The colony was as yet in too primitive a state to manifest any real desire for education, although a School of Arts was opened at Brisbane in 1852, which was premature, and therefore unsuccessful. A far more important matter for the time being was the establishment of a bank in 1850, which relieved both squatter and merchant from the costly delay of communicating every commercial transaction to Sydney.

The discovery of the Victorian goldfields in 1851 had temporarily an adverse effect upon the northern district, **A Shortage of Labour.** for many workmen and some squatters abandoned Moreton Bay in the hope of sudden wealth at Ballarat. The crying need of the place was labour, and labour seemed now almost impossible to obtain. The British Colonial Office was indeed ready to supply convicts in any number; but though the squatters were not averse from a gratuitous supply, they revolted at the idea that eventual emancipists should receive land grants, and transportation was not regularly resumed. Some Chinese were imported; but in order to counteract the dangerous possibility of criminal and coloured labour becoming the basic population of the colony, the Presbyterian minister, Lang of Sydney, advocated a policy of free immigration.¹ The first British emigrant ship arrived in 1848; and, in addition to the supply from the mother country, over a thousand Germans were brought in subsequently. But the total white population had only risen to 19,321 in 1855.

A few industries had, however, already been established, as well as the main business of stock-farming, which augured well for the future of the colony. An experiment **General Progress.** in 1846 showed that sugar could be grown, but the trade languished for twenty years, until in 1865 the

¹ Lang played a considerable part in the politics, and some part in the religion, of the day. The insistence on white immigration was his most important service to Australia; some years subsequently he advocated its separation from the Empire.—Bk. xix. ch. iii.

Government gave special facilities for its cultivation. In 1849 coal was discovered on the Brisbane River; two years later the first wool ship sailed direct from Brisbane to London. Gold was found in 1858, but in too small quantities to be profitable. In 1859 the colony contained 23,504 horses, 432,890 cattle, and 3,166,802 sheep. Cotton had been grown, and the first bale was shipped to England in 1850; in 1853 a brewery was established, as well as a candle and a soap factory. Since the latter industry, however, only had an output of five tons of soap a year we may assume that the personal wants of the community were not extravagant. The budding civilisation of Queensland is perhaps better shown by the early inauguration of a racecourse, and by the establishment of the first newspaper, the *Moreton Bay Courier*, on 20th June 1846. But as the proprietor of the latter at one time appealed to the subscribers 'to pay up their accounts before they become deeply stricken in years,' it may be deduced that literature was as much an exotic as personal cleanliness.

Every industry was hampered by the lack of labour; but the most immediate subject of complaint was administrative. Small though its population was, the colony had already a distinct state-consciousness, and it was galling in every way to be treated as an appanage of Sydney. There were likewise practical inconveniences in referring every question of government and law to officials some six hundred miles away, who could have little knowledge of peculiar local conditions, and who, in fact, had little sympathy with local aspirations. A vigorous agitation for separation from New South Wales was set on foot in the Moreton Bay district, which was not diminished when Victoria secured independence in 1851; and though it was denounced as weak, mischievous, and insane by prominent politicians in New South Wales—who reproached the northern settlers with ingratitude in wishing to desert the mother

Queensland
a separate
Colony, 1859.

colony after having been a burden for so many years—it made steady progress in public opinion. Amusing evidence of the fervour with which it was desired is shown in a grandiloquent address presented by the citizens of Ipswich to Sir William Denison. He was told that ‘superhuman qualities’—which that excellent official was very far from possessing—were required to ‘steer between the Scylla of Downing Street bureaucracy and the Charybdis of popular discontent and incessant grumbling,’ and that ‘Her Majesty’s representatives have been amongst us, but not of us.’ But despite the opposition from Sydney, the division of the colony was admitted to be desirable in 1856 by the British Government. A boundary dispute caused some delay, but at length, on 13th May 1859, an Order in Council was issued, separating the Moreton Bay district from New South Wales, and conferring on it the title of Queensland in honour of Queen Victoria.¹

The capital of the new colony, which was named after Governor Brisbane, had in its early years been a mere miserable collection of huts. It had no streets; even
 Brisbane
 City. the commandant had only a wooden residence, and the minor officials lived in rubble buildings. The river bar made navigation difficult; the convicts made society impossible; the mosquitoes made life unbearable. When Governor Gipps inspected the place in 1842 he thought it could never be more than a provincial township; and even after the country had been thrown open to settlement, and men gambled freely in urban land allotments, Brisbane did not for some time become a more desirable home. An old colonist, A. A. Hull, describing the capital as he remembered it in 1862, said that it had then only one street deserving the

¹ Not many years later, an agitation sprang up for the division of the northern part of Queensland from the southern. The good folk of Brisbane, with that disregard of consistency which we all of us show when our own interests are involved, reproached the northern settlers with ingratitude, in the very terms that Sydney had previously used towards Brisbane.

name, and 'more tumble-down shanties than substantial houses,' while there was 'a foul marsh in the middle of the city, and the croaking of frogs prevented those who were staying at the Royal Hotel from sleeping.' Not for some years after the separation of Queensland from New South Wales could Brisbane be compared to the other great Australian cities.

The lesser townships of the state were yet more primitive. Hull described Maryborough as possessing only a few yards of street, in which he had seen a drag with sixteen bullocks stick fast in the mud; the English church was a slab building, tapestried with Indian matting. And the aboriginal blacks held their cannibal feasts only half a mile from the town, whence the chant of their corroboree floated through the white men's windows, and their quarrels often took place in the very settlement itself, to the terror of the women who were involuntary spectators. Patrick Leslie bought the site of Warwick for four pounds; while, in 1848, Drayton, he said, 'consisted of a publichouse and a shanty or two, with only one well for the town; and it was such a one, as to get a bucket full of water one had to go down with a pannikin and bale it into the bucket.' These, and many other cities which were then undisturbed bush, now possess substantial banks, hotels, and churches; while there is hardly a township so small or remote but has its school, its local newspaper for the neighbourhood, and its direct telegraph line to the capital.

The foundations of another colony were thus well and truly laid by the British in Australia. But there is a less pleasant side to the history of Queensland. In each Conflict with the Natives. Australian, as in practically all of the early American settlements, there had been trouble with the aborigines. The convicts who thronged the districts around Sydney had quickly come into conflict with the blacks. In Tasmania the whole native race had been wiped out in two

generations. West Australia was continually the scene of guerilla warfare. The precautions of Batman had not permanently availed at Port Phillip. And neither Gibbon Wakefield nor George Grey had been able to prevent misconduct in South Australia ; indeed, from that colony came the memorable justification of theft by one of the aborigines : ' Whitefellow kill blackfellow's kangaroo ; all same blackfellow kill whitefellow's kangaroo.' But while Tasmania bears the palm for cruelty among the convict colonies, Queensland has the bad pre-eminence in the states that were mainly founded by free men ; and no honest chronicler of her history can pass over the racial struggle there in silence.

The early relations between whites and blacks in Queensland, as in many other countries, had been peaceable and almost cordial. But when the British increased in number, and their flocks grew larger, the natives stole the latter ; and in revenge they were shot by the former. The victim was not always, or even often, the actual thief : ' The difficulty of detecting the real criminals,' said the *Brisbane Courier*, ' was obviated by a punishment of the whole . . . they are regarded as worthy of nothing but slaughter.' And matters became steadily worse year by year. The authorised correspondent of a Melbourne journal, who went to investigate the gold discoveries at Port Curtis in 1858, wrote that the relations between the two races were those of ' war to the knife. The atrocities on both sides are perfectly horrible, and I do not believe the Government make any effort to stop the slaughter of the aborigines. A native police force is indeed actively engaged, but exclusively against the blacks, who are shot down by their bloodthirsty brethren at every opportunity. I believe the blacks retaliate whenever they can, and never lose a chance of murdering a white man, woman, or child. . . . The number of blacks killed is impossible to estimate. They are being killed officially by police, and unofficially by settlers and diggers every day, nor are

women and children by any means spared when murders are being revenged.' It was a war of despair on the one side, of extermination on the other.

It is well to finish the shameful tale in one telling. Twenty years afterwards, when the outrages still continued unabated, the *Queenslander* newspaper denounced them strongly in almost identical language. 'On occupying new territory,' said that journal, 'they (the blacks) are treated in exactly the same way as the wild beasts or birds the settlers may find there. . . . Their goods are taken, their children forcibly stolen, their women carried away entirely at the caprice of white men. The least show of resistance is answered by a rifle bullet; in fact, the first introduction between blacks and whites is often marked by the unprovoked murder of some of the former. . . . The majority of settlers have been apparently influenced by the same sort of treatment as that which guides men in their treatment of the brute creation. Many, perhaps the majority, have stood aside in silent disgust, . . . and a few have always protested in the name of humanity against such treatment. . . . But the protests of the minority have been disregarded, and the white brutes who fancied the amusement have murdered, ravished, and robbed the blacks without let or hindrance. The government of the colony have always been at hand to save them from the consequences of their crime. The native police, organised and paid by us, is sent to do work which its officers are forbidden to report in detail; and . . . when the blacks, stung to retaliation, have shed white blood, or speared white men's stock, the native police have been sent to disperse them. What "disperse" means is well enough known—a convenient euphemism for wholesale murder.' And that this was no imaginary accusation was proved by a long list of outrages, in which were mentioned the 'nameless deeds of horror discussed openly by many a camp fire,' and the specific instance of the killing of many aboriginal families by putting

arsenic in the food with which they had been supplied under false professions of friendship—a dastardly act for which white humanity may well blush.

There were some, indeed, who defended such cruelty on the ground that there was no room for both races in Queensland, and that ‘the sooner the weaker is wiped out the better. . . . A useless race, what does it matter what they suffer?’ Even in the Queensland Assembly in 1880 it was said that ‘the black race have got to go’; and a commission of enquiry into the outrages and their causes was refused.

The Colonial Government had been too weak to interfere actively, but at least part of the blame must be laid at the door of the imperial administration. An Act was passed in 1839 ‘to allow the aboriginal natives of New South Wales to be received as competent witnesses in criminal cases’; but it was disallowed by the British Cabinet. Had the Australians been as earnest to do justice to the natives of their own continent as they were to protect themselves against the immigration of coloured races from other lands, they would have reintroduced the Act again and again until the British Colonial Office gave way before their persistence; but, at any rate, their one effort to secure the competence of non-European witnesses in British courts of law—which would have done much to render racial crime more easy of detection, and thereby eventually more difficult to commit—was defeated in Downing Street and not in Sydney.¹

The most exquisite flowers of the tropics grow spontaneously from the rotting soil of their own vegetable ancestors.

The White Australia Policy. In the same way, from such deeds of shame and violence to the antipodean aborigines sprang the noble ideal of a White Australia in the next generation. The crude and cruel germ of the creed lay in the

¹ A similar example can be cited from West Australia, where the aborigines were better treated by the Colonial Parliament, after the grant of responsible government in 1890, than they had been by the Imperial Parliament.

exclamation that there was no room for two races in Queensland, and in the policy which went far to secure the sole possession of the whites by the slaughter of the blacks. And the later humanitarian view, which in America as in Australia worked for the same end by the more merciful means of isolating the fast diminishing aborigines in special localities, was in effect merely a refinement of feeling that touched but the higher elements among the whites, and that only when the blacks were objects no longer of danger, but of pity.

CHAPTER IV

THE VICTORIAN GOLDFIELDS: 1851-60¹

WHEN the world rested after the titanic struggle with Napoleon, and Australia finally passed quietly under English rule, the southern continent ceased to be an object of much interest beyond the British Empire. Whatever colonial ambitions the French might have had in the antipodes soon vanished. Other European nations had more pressing occupations at home. And there was as yet no fear of an Asiatic invasion to haunt the imagination of the new English settlements to the south. To the rest of the world, in fact,

¹ Authorities.—The same as for Port Phillip in the preceding chapter, together with the official correspondence and the newspaper files of the period. There are many descriptions of Victoria at this time: Wathen's *Golden Colony* contains much information; Howitt's two works, his *Impressions* and *Land, Labour and Gold*, are lengthy and tedious, but occasionally useful. Clara Aspinall's *Three Years in Melbourne* is the light and amusing writing of a literary novice. Bonwick's *Notes of a Gold Digger* is a contemporary work; Bradford's *The Ballarat Field* is also worth consulting. Haydon's *Five Years' Experience* is of little value.

The opposition view may be seen in a pamphlet, whose portentous title sufficiently explains its contents, headed, *Does the Discovery of Gold in Victoria, viewed in relation to its Moral and Social Effects, as hitherto developed, deserve to be considered a National Blessing or a National Curse* (1853)?

Australia seemed merely a distant province, of enormous extent, indeed, but probably of exaggerated value and of small real importance, at any rate for several centuries to come. The hunger for land had not yet reached such intensity that the possession of territory was worth disputing at the cost of war.

So the position stood for thirty years ; so it might conceivably have stood for another century. But an event occurred in 1851 which turned the eyes of the whole world on the colony of Victoria. The treasure that had been sought in so many wild expeditions, the secret of the southern seas for which so many men had risked and lost their lives, was discovered at last by a mere accident. On 9th August 1851, eighty miles from the small provincial capital of Melbourne, gold in large quantities was discovered at Ballarat.

That gold existed in Australia had already been foretold—it would be difficult to name the British colony in which its presence has not been proclaimed—and gold had indeed actually been found in various other districts only a few months previously. Count Strzelecki declared in 1839 that the Australian Alps were auriferous. Other travellers had pointed out the similarity between the soil and configuration of Australia and the gold districts of California. And in February 1851 gold was discovered a few miles from the quiet township of Bathurst in New South Wales ; but those who hastened thither from Sydney soon returned home dejected. The field was not rich enough to repay the labour of digging ; and the disappointed seekers after wealth, who had been misled by their credulity and cupidity, imagined as they returned empty-handed that the very laughing jackasses of the country jeered at their discomfiture.

But at Ballarat there was a very different story to tell. The gold deposits there were alluvial ; the gold had only to be dug up, washed, and stored, or taken down to the coast and

sold. In many cases it lay about on the surface in nuggets, which varied in size from a few ounces to a solid block of 184 pounds troy, 9 ounces, 6 pennyweights—the largest ever found in Victoria. Labilliere the historian, who visited Ballarat as a boy, saw a man picking the nuggets out of a lump of earth as a schoolboy picks plums out of a pudding ; nor was this at all an exceptional case.

Scarcely had the news of the discovery of gold at Ballarat been received in Melbourne before other deposits were found at Mount Alexander and Bendigo. The whole land now seemed suddenly to have become one vast goldfield. And forthwith everybody that could do so deserted Melbourne and Geelong ; peaceful and regular industry was no longer attractive when there was the chance that wealth enough for a lifetime might be picked up in a morning.

**Bendigo and
Mount
Alexander.**

The master and the man both took the road to the mines ; Government officials and police hurriedly deserted their posts. The crews of inward-bound vessels disappeared on shore and into the interior within a few hours after their arrival. One man who came from Albany in West Australia to Melbourne on business could not return because the ship he had specially chartered for the double voyage was left derelict in Port Phillip.

In four months the population of Geelong fell from 8291 to 2850 ; and other townships probably diminished in like proportion. Nor was the exodus confined to the people of the colony. The news quickly reached Sydney and Van Diemen's Land, and a less desirable class of diggers now began to appear at the fields. Among the free settlers arrived escaped convicts and emancipists ; and crime in the goldfields, which had been rare, became usual. A drastic Convicts Prevention Act was at once passed, which reduced the evil ; but many equivocal characters still made their way by devious routes to the source of riches.

Even from West Australia a few men set out to walk the three thousand odd miles to Ballarat through the barren wilderness. From every quarter of the globe settlers poured into Melbourne at the rate of ten to twenty thousand in a month. The town could not contain them all, and the harbour became congested with shipping; a temporary city was erected in the suburbs, whose name of Canvastown sufficiently describes its character.

Still all could not find accommodation; and memories have been preserved of eager miners, who failed to find a resting-place on land, sleeping in the discarded boilers of a steamer till they could go up-country. Before a month had passed from the first discovery of gold an armed escort was provided by the Government to bring the treasure down to Melbourne. Within a few weeks there were ten thousand diggers at Golden Point, Ballarat, which a year before had been the silent and unnamed pasturage of a squatter's sheep.

The cost of goods, of labour, and of transit went up enormously; the most extraordinary prices were charged and obtained. At one time hay was dearer than wheat. High Prices
and Scarcity
of Labour. A skilled workman in Melbourne could obtain £2 a day at his ordinary work: his competitors were all at the goldfields. No carrier would transport goods under the rate of £1 a ton the mile: and a ton of flour, which cost £25 at Melbourne, could not be bought at Bendigo under £200. A single cabbage, which cost half-a-crown in Canvastown, sold for five shillings at the mines.¹

Many a long-headed man saw the promise of a far easier and more certain road to wealth in setting up a store near the goldfields than in digging for himself; and the foundations of several respectable fortunes were thus laid. The lusty crowd of miners were improvident if they had little luck, for their gains were then not worth hoarding; they were reckless

¹ Even this price was exceeded a few years later in South Africa, where a cauliflower fetched twenty-five shillings at Kimberley.

if they 'struck it rich,' for then a little additional extravagance made no difference. And the storekeeper drew a sufficiently large profit from both.

The Government had wisely refused to allow licences for alcoholic liquors to be sold on the goldfields; and although no doubt a certain amount of illicit trade went on, there was little actual drunkenness. But in Melbourne, and on the road from the capital to the diggings, things were very different. Inns and drinking-saloons lined the whole way: the miners going up to Ballarat or Bendigo drank for luck; those coming back drank from exuberance or despair.

Prices were high, and one may be sure that the liquor was vile. But the demand seemed as unlimited as the supply. Champagne was drunk from a bucket, and a nugget or a handful of gold dust given in exchange; money had lost its real value for a time, but not alcohol.

At the goldfields themselves, despite their large population and the diversity of nationalities, there were few scenes of disorder, if we except the great riot of 1854, which arose through dissatisfaction with the conditions laid down by the Government. Those conditions were modified after enquiry by Sir Charles Hotham, and steady work was at once resumed.

A few of the miners amassed substantial fortunes. A few of those few kept them. Many more obtained a competence. The majority made less than if they had remained **The Miners' Profits.** at their regular work. Everybody had to pay a monthly digger's fee of thirty shillings to the Government; everybody had likewise to pay exorbitant prices for food, fodder, and utensils; and the average yield of gold per head in 1852 was not more than £233, while in 1864 it had sunk to £70.

As the alluvial goldfields at Ballarat became worked out, and the quartz mines of Bendigo rose into greater prominence, the search for gold became more of an industry and less of a

gamble. The results were less precarious ; but capital was now required, and the old type of independent prospector no longer had a chance. If he had succeeded previously, he might now become part proprietor of a mine, or employ others to work a reef ; if he had failed, he left the country or drifted into other occupations.

The gold fever thus died down gradually ; but it left permanent marks on Victoria. If we cannot echo Wentworth's grandiloquent phrase, that by the discovery of gold ' the colony was precipitated into a nation,' we can at least reckon in solid figures the progress of the place. The population had been 77,345 in 1851 ; in 1855 it was 333,000. And of these the great majority were Englishmen : the alien inhabitants were calculated at ten per cent. of the whole, of whom half were Chinese and a fifth German. The general trade of the colony had risen from £2,000,000 sterling to £25,000,000. In ten years altogether £110,000,000 of solid gold was exported, nearly all of it to England. And in place of the old irregular and slow-sailing vessels the Peninsular and Oriental Company had introduced a steam-packet service to Port Phillip.

Some few of the original settlers affected to regret the old days of peaceful pastoral pursuits, when their business made steady but slow progress, and no abnormal conditions disturbed prices or industry from year to year. In the case of some of the squatters, perhaps, the grievance was real : for those colonial aristocrats were treated uncereemoniously by the new-comers, and scant respect was paid to the rights of a sheep-run when gold was found upon it. But enhanced prices for their meat gave the squatters greater profits than they had dreamed of before ; there was no more talk of tallow-value when mutton was wanted by a thousand hungry miners. And the fortunate owners of original land allotments in the capital soon found themselves millionaires without exertion.

In the early forties, the boys of Melbourne had chased the goats which browsed on the grass that still grew in the main streets. Ten years later, the kangaroo and cockatoo had possessed the place in solitude. A few Melbourne. years later, seven hundred guineas a foot was demanded and perhaps paid for a frontage; and strips of soil which had been purchased for thirty or forty pounds in Governor Bourke's time fetched forty thousand pounds within a generation.

John Pascoe Fawkner had described the site of Melbourne as being possessed of a 'velvet-like grass carpet, decked with flowers of most lively hues, most liberally spread over the land, fresh water, fine lowlands, and lovely knolls around the lagoons on the flat or swamp, flocks almost innumerable of teals, ducks, geese and swans and minor fowls'; but in his time the city contained only some half-dozen huts and one or two drinking-saloons and stores. A local branch of the Van Diemen's Land Bank was soon added. A church was built, which was at first no more than 'a small, square, wooden building, with an old ship's bell suspended from a most defamatory-looking gallows-like structure'; a bishop was appointed, and arrived in 1848. The first manuscript newspaper, entitled *The Melbourne Advertiser*, was published on 1st January 1838; a printed successor soon appeared, but for some months it was only produced under great difficulties.

These, however, were the days before the gold boom, when there was little to distinguish Melbourne from any other newly-founded colonial township. A mighty change occurred after 1851. On the first discovery of the mines, indeed, property had depreciated, since everybody was selling houses, furniture, and stock for whatever price they could obtain in order to raise supplies wherewith to reach the diggings. But when men and money again flowed into the capital, Melbourne became one huge fair, the centre of eager expectant life, the temporary home of men of every rank and of none—mammon-hunters all—rough, barbarian, strong.

The population doubled and trebled, and doubled again. Nearly all the gold found up-country—which was assayed at twenty-three carats fine, a far purer quality than the Californian, and more generally useful than the gold alloyed with silver that New South Wales produced—was sent down through Melbourne to the European market. Much of the goods transported to the diggings went through Melbourne; and the insistent rivalry of Geelong, a place far better suited for landing passengers and supplies, only stimulated the merchants of the capital to further enterprise. Some enthusiasts even compared that city, which stood upon seven hills, to a new Rome; others more truly prophesied that it would become the largest place in the southern hemisphere; still others, more prosaic and practical, bought land.

They were wise in their generation; for the goldfields had secured the future, not of Melbourne and Victoria only, but of all Australia.¹

¹ By 1910, Victoria had produced altogether gold to the value of £285,100,389; New South Wales, £57,189,282; Queensland, £70,224,573; South Australia, £2,840,206; Tasmania, £6,956,504; and West Australia, £91,780,563: grand total value, £514,091,517.

The great Kimberley goldfield in West Australia was discovered in 1886, and Kalgoorlie in 1893. The Coolgardie field had been found in 1892, and in a single afternoon the lucky discoverers secured five hundred ounces.

BOOK XIX

THE BIRTH OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATION: 1850-1901

CHAPTER I

THE EXPLORATION OF AUSTRALIA¹

ON an old French chart of the year 1807 the southern shores of Australia for a distance of some thousand miles from Bass Strait to the great Bight are clearly marked with the name of Terre Napoléon. And as though to remove any possible doubt of the meaning of the words, the two considerable breaks which the southern ocean

The French
and
Australia.

¹ The original authorities are clear and trustworthy; the explorers of Australia were honest, able men, whose errors were, at most, blunders, miscalculations, and misjudgments, not lies. For once in a way travellers' tales may be received with less than the usual caution.

The main sources of this chapter will be found in John Oxley's *Journals of Two Expeditions*; Hume and Howell's *Overland Journey of 1824*, reprinted 1897; Sir T. L. Mitchell's *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*; George Grey's *Journals of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-west and Western Australia*; King's *Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coasts of Australia*; Eyre's *Discoveries in Central Australia*; Leichhardt's *Journal of an Overland Expedition*; Sturt's *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia*, and his later *Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia*, together with the excellent *Life of Charles Sturt* by Mrs. Sturt. Egerton Warburton's *Across Australia*, and his *Diary of Explorations* in the Parliamentary Papers of South Australia; there are records of several other explorers in the Parliamentary Papers of this colony. Andrew Jackson's *Burke and the Australian Exploring Expedition of 1860*, with *The Progress Reports and Final Reports of the Exploration Committee of the Royal Society of Victoria* (1872). Forrest's *Explorations in Australia*; J. W. Lewis's *Journal of Lake Eyre Expedition, 1874-5* (Parliamentary Papers, South Australia); and Giles's *Travels in Central Australia, 1872-4*.

makes in the otherwise regular landline of the southern continent are named Golfe Bonaparte and Golfe Josephine; while other names of pronouncedly Gallic origin—Montesquieu, Talleyrand, Descartes, and Rabelais—are scattered along the spacious coasts.

All these names have long since disappeared. Napoleon Land is divided between the two states of Victoria and South Australia. Bonaparte and unlucky Josephine have been replaced by Spencer and St. Vincent on the waterway to Adelaide and the lakes of the interior; philosopher Descartes, wily Talleyrand, serene Montesquieu must seek their fame in other spheres; even Rabelais has been ejected. Practical British captains and heroes of common and even vulgar names—Jim Crow's Flat, Martin's Washpool, and Tilley's Swamp—have ousted more renowned rivals from the antipodean map; but the old French chart may still recall the days when Australia was known indifferently as New Holland and New South Wales, and when a successful French settlement might easily have fixed the mighty name of Napoleon on the continent in perpetuity.

Whether or not the all-conquering Emperor had the desire or the intention of colonising Australia remains a problem which the industry of a century of biographers and historians has failed to solve. No shadow of a hint of a projected settlement in the antipodes is known to exist in the state documents of the first French Empire. No mention of such a scheme is recorded in any of Napoleon's conversations, yet Napoleon talked freely of his schemes to his intimates.¹ And the voyage which the French traveller Nicolas Baudin made in 1801 to Australia, when he named its south coast *Terre Napoléon*, and sprinkled Gallic celebrities freely over its

¹ Negative evidence is not, of course, conclusive; but no secrecy existed concerning Napoleon's other projects in Louisiana, in Egypt, or in India; and it is hardly conceivable that a projected Australian settlement would have been wrapped in impenetrable mystery. The subject is discussed in Scott's *Terre Napoléon*, an admirable work.

uncelebrated coasts, was not accompanied or followed by any attempt to claim the land for France. The first Gallic possession in the antipodes, in fact, was not acquired until 1853, when the island of New Caledonia was annexed for a convict station ; and none of the names which Baudin gave to his discoveries were ever in ordinary use.¹

Whatever hopes French statesmen and travellers may have cherished of planting a second New France in Australia ² to replace the older New France in North America that had been lost a generation since, the overwhelming sea-power of Britain, which was never questioned for a century after that autumn day in 1805 when Trafalgar was won and lost, prevented their fruition. The fleet of England stood between Britain and destruction while Napoleon planned his schemes of invasion ; not less effectually did its unseen influence protect the infant British settlements on the other side of the world against foreign encroachment. Thanks to the British navy, Australia became British through and through, in a sense that neither the United States, nor Canada, nor South Africa could ever claim to be.

But for some years after the planting of her first settlement in Australia, England herself knew little of the interior of the continent she had claimed. Bass and Flinders and other mariners explored the coasts, which were soon mapped out with fair precision ; but inland the charts were blank. Occasionally a convict escaped into the interior, and either perished of

¹ Another and earlier French traveller was more fortunate. The name of D'Entrecasteaux, who explored the coasts of Tasmania and West Australia in 1792, has clung to the point where the Darling Range finds its uttermost limit in the ocean ; and a few other French names in those countries—*Recherche Archipelago* and *Esperance Bay*—still attest the work done by his expedition.

² Several instances are mentioned in preceding chapters of supposed French schemes of settlement in Australia, which alarmed the British colonists from time to time. Probably France would have occupied Australia had England not forestalled her ; in the case of New Zealand she certainly would have done so (bk. xxi. ch. ii.).

Ignorance
of the
Interior.

starvation or thirst, or made common cause with the aborigines;¹ but these brought back no knowledge of the country. And time after time the path of the first explorers in New South Wales was barred by the chasms, ravines, and gorges which formed the seemingly impassable chain of the Blue Mountains; yet until the long range which parts the vast interior from the coastal strip was pierced, no real knowledge of Australia could be obtained.

Sharp necessity at length pointed the way. In the year 1813 the English settlers experienced the first of those recurrent droughts which are the curse of the Australian climate. New pasture lands were urgently required to save the increasing stock of the colony; but on the maritime side of the Blue Mountains no such lands could be found. Once more an attempt was made to explore the forbidding range by a small party of explorers, one of whom was William Charles Wentworth, at that time no more than a clever youth whose future political fame was still unsuspected.² Success crowned their efforts when they rounded a spur of the hills and saw open country beyond, and the immediate problem was solved; but shortly afterwards a large river was discovered flowing westwards, and the question was at once raised whither this river led, and where was its outlet in the ocean.

¹ In 1842 Stuart Russell the explorer found an escaped convict who had lived fourteen years among the aborigines. A somewhat similar case is mentioned in bk. xviii. ch. iii.

² For Wentworth's talents as a writer see the following chapter; as a politician, chap. iii. He was perhaps the most considerable figure after Macarthur in early Australia. Born at Norfolk Island in 1793, he was of Irish extraction, the son of a surgeon, and, like a good Irishman, spent most of his life opposing the Government. Educated in England, where he wrote the poem *Australia*, from which I have quoted in chap. ii., he returned to New South Wales, and distinguished himself by leading the opposition to the transportation system. He declaimed against Governor Darling (bk. xviii. ch. i.) with the true fervour of Celtic youth, announcing his intention of pursuing that unhappy official to the gallows. The threat did not materialise, and Wentworth, who had conceived the idea of founding a new English nation in Australia—an idea of which he was the pioneer—turned his attention to advocat-

The southern shores of Australia had already been well surveyed, and no great estuary had been found in that direction; it seemed in consequence certain that this stream, which if it flowed through the whole continent must be one of the great rivers of the world, must either empty itself on the uncharted western or northern coasts, or feed some great inland sea in the unknown heart of Australia.

On the answer to that question hung much of the future development of the continent; and in the search for that visionary stream and phantom inland sea two generations of explorers spent their energies and sometimes sacrificed their lives in vain.

It was to solve this problem that Lieutenant John Oxley set out from Sydney in 1817 on an official expedition of discovery. His party followed first the Lachlan River, then the Macquarie, as those streams flowed through a wilderness plain to the west; but the report they brought back was evil. The explorers declared that a large part of the country consisted of 'deserts abandoned by every living creature capable of getting out of them'; the more north-westerly they went the more convinced was Oxley that 'for all the practical purposes of civilised man the interior of this country, westward of a certain meridian, was uninhabitable, deprived as it was of wood, grass, and water,' while there was said to be an inexpressible weariness in the uniformity of its barren desolation. Generally the soil was 'a poor and cold clay,' and 'the flats

Oxley seeks
the great
Australian
River, 1817.

ing a free constitution. After assisting in the foundation of Sydney University, he visited England in 1854, at which time the expected constitution was granted, largely through his efforts. He died in England in 1872, and by his direction his remains were taken to Australia and buried there.

The first exponent of Australian nationalism, Wentworth lived fifty years before his time. A representative of the squatter interest, his name is rather unfortunately associated with land speculation in New Zealand, where his purchase was disallowed by Governor Gibbs (bk. xxii.) — a fact which, if it increased his hatred of the Government, certainly did nothing to increase his reputation.

were certainly not adapted for cattle; the grass was too swampy, and the bushes, swamps, and lagoons too thickly intermingled with the better portions to render it a safe or desirable grazing country.' Yet on those plains which Oxley too hastily condemned millions of sheep and cattle have since grazed and fattened every year.

A few miles further, and the stream, which had broadened and narrowed and broadened again, lost itself in an ocean of reeds. Oxley, embarrassed and surprised at this unexpected discovery, hazarded the opinion that this shallow inland sea might be the end of the river's course, and retraced his steps with some difficulty, convinced that both land and water were useless—an opinion which later and more extensive explorations gave him little reason to alter.

Australia still had hid her face as of old from the explorer; and it was the misfortune of Oxley, who was not naturally of a very sanguine disposition, to enter the interior when much of the country was in flood.

Those who followed in his footsteps speedily corrected his mistaken conclusions. The rivers had shrunk, the floods subsided, the shallow inland sea had vanished; and in their place was a country, marshy and boggy indeed, but generally rich and fit for pasture. It improved with occupation, for the soft pad of the grazing cattle kneaded, fertilised, and trod down the shaking soil; and the flocks of the pioneer squatters soon thrived on the vast plains which Oxley had discovered and condemned.

The squatters themselves pushed further and further inland as their flocks increased, and many a stretch of virgin bush and scrub owes its discovery and its name to long-forgotten prospectors who drove their cattle onwards to new country. Some of these pioneers prospered and grew rich; some perished of starvation; some were killed by aborigines, or drowned in sudden overwhelming floods after long rainless

His Failure
and Disap-
pointment.

The Pioneer
Squatters.

months in which their stock died by the thousand ; and some, too, were still forced onwards in the hope of green pastures. The squatter's life was all a gamble ; but a gamble in which the best man usually won, and the man who won often found a fortune as the prize.

But the mystery of the westward-flowing river was yet to solve. Another stream had meanwhile been discovered, the upper reaches of the Murrumbidgee ; ¹ but none had followed its downward course to the sea, and no outlet west or south of the continent had yet been found.

It was not long, however, before an attempt was made to solve the riddle that had perplexed Oxley. In the year 1824 a party set out under the lead of Howell, a retired shipmaster who had settled in Australia, and Alexander Hamilton Hume, a lad who had been bred in the Australian bush, and who had therefore an enormous advantage over his predecessors in this work of exploration. They crossed the Murrumbidgee while in flood, and turning south-westwards, passed through a rich country of green grass and running water before striking a range of mountains whose tops, even on the hot summer day when the expedition first sighted them from afar, were covered with snow. These they called the Australian Alps.

The Howell-
Hume
Expedition,
1824.

Eight days afterwards the travellers came upon a noble stream which they called the Hume, in memory of the young explorer's father. Had they followed its course instead of crossing it, they would have added the greatest river in Australia to the maps ; for this river was that which is now called the Murray.

Instead, they pushed on towards the south, crossing in their path other streams, one of which, now known as the Goulburn, at first bore Howell's name ; and in time they reached the coast near the spot where the city of Geelong has since been an ineffectual rival of Melbourne. Turning back upon their

¹ Murrumbidgee was its native name.

track after a short rest, they retraced their footsteps, and reached Sydney early in 1825.

The journey had been marked by frequent quarrels, which at one time became so serious that it was agreed to divide the single tent that accommodated the party into two equal halves, while the one frying-pan which Howell and Hume could boast for cooking their food was broken by the two leaders struggling for its possession.

Despite their quarrels, Hume and Howell had added many hundred miles of good pasture country to the vacant map of inland Australia ; but still no outlet to the west or south of the continent had been found ; nor had they solved the vexed question of the westward-flowing river in the interior. And there were many who still maintained a firm belief in the existence of a mighty stream draining the whole of central Australia, fed perhaps from some vast chain of inland mountains ; one enthusiast even went so far as to say that he ' felt the strongest conviction, a kind of second sight, that a river of the first magnitude would be found. It was impossible,' he thought, ' to contemplate the works of a Bounteous Creator, and believe that any imperfection could exist on the face of our planet, as would certainly be the case if no outlet existed ' for the waters of Australia. As to the idea that ' such a sea of water ' as the explorers had discovered when the interior was in flood ' could be evaporated or absorbed, it was too preposterous an absurdity to be entertained for a single moment.' And it was suggested that this important stream, which was still believed to empty itself into the unexplored north-west of the continent, should be called emphatically the Great River or the Desired Blessing.¹

¹ *The Friend of Australia*, by a Retired Officer of the Hon. East India Company's Service, 1830. I owe thanks to Mr. Lewin, the energetic librarian of the Royal Colonial Institute for drawing my attention to this, and indeed to many other works which I might otherwise have overlooked.

But the hopes of men are often futile, and the things they spend their lives in seeking no more than dreams and shadows in a world of disappointment. Another generation of explorers sought that colossal waterway in vain before they admitted that an imperfection did indeed exist in the work of the Bounteous Creator, and that the Desired Blessing which they had marked upon the map of expectation had no place in fact.

But while these high hopes were in men's minds, the work of exploration still went forward. In the last years of his life the pessimistic Oxley was discovering the Brisbane River, where a penal station was shortly afterwards founded ; ¹ another convict colony was established in that land of disillusion, the Northern Territory ; ² Allan Cunningham was on the Darling Downs in 1828, the year that Oxley died ; ³ and a few months later the name of Captain Charles Sturt, one of the great heroes in the annals of Australian discovery, comes prominently on the scene.

Unlike Wentworth and Hume, Charles Sturt was not a native of Australia. The second child in a family of thirteen, he was the son of a puisne judge of Bengal in the days of the East India Company. Born in 1795 in the province that Clive had conquered, the future explorer received his education in England, and had some short experience of military service in the Pyrenees and Canada before his regiment—the 39th Foot—was ordered to New South Wales in 1827.

Charles
Sturt,
1795-1869.

A soldier's life in the antipodes in those early days of convict settlers, stern discipline, and military governors like Brisbane and Darling, was usually thought an unwelcome exile from the comforts of home and the chance of promotion on active service abroad. But to Sturt it opened out a career which, if poor in results when measured by the low standards of worldly prosperity, was yet rich in fame and honourable achievement as an explorer.

¹ Bk. xviii. ch. i.

² Bk. xx. ch. ii.

³ Bk. xviii. ch. iii.

The immediate occasion of Sturt's first journey was a misfortune that was no longer novel in the southern colonies. **His First Inland Journey, 1828.** A drought as prolonged and disastrous as that which had gripped Australia in 1813 again afflicted the country in 1828. Men whose stock was dying for lack of pasture, squatters who sought in vain for water to refresh their flocks and herds, told each other in desperation that it seemed as if the blue skies of the antipodes would never again be swept by clouds. General ruin was in sight if the drought continued; but the days passed and the weeks passed and the months passed, and the pitiless sun shone down on parched cracked earth, on dead and dying cattle, and on men whose hearts were gnawed by black despair.

At such a time the most desperate chance will be seized. And the old belief in a westward-flowing river and an inland sea—either of which would have saved the colony—was now revived by a report that Allan Cunningham had brought back from one of the aboriginal tribes in 1827, of great sheets of open water further west; and although aboriginal traditions are notoriously untrustworthy,¹ the colony was in such extremities that it was determined to seek at once the promised boon. Sturt, who was himself a convinced believer in the existence of an inland sea, was placed in charge of the expedition; and Hamilton Hume, with whom a lifelong friendship now sprang up,² accompanied the small party into the interior.

But as they marched the terrible effects of the drought

¹ The early explorers in Canada were constantly misled by the reports of the redskins (vol. iii. bk. x. ch. iii.), and the same difficulty occurred with the aborigines in Australia. Sir John Forrest, for instance, relates (*Explorations*) that he was told by the aborigines that another tribe had reported the murder of himself and all his party, during one of his journeys in West Australia.

² Hume lived to a good old age, dying in 1873, four years after the death of Sturt. On the tomb of Sturt was engraved the beautiful verse of the Hebrew Psalmist, never more suitable than when applied to the explorer who had faced so many perils without flinching: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.' He was buried at Prestbury, near Cheltenham, in England.

were everywhere seen. The Macquarie River abruptly ceased to flow ; the sea of reeds that had checked Oxley's progress was bare and dry ; such small pools and creeks as were found from time to time yielded nothing save bitter and scarcely drinkable water, in which were found occasionally the decaying and disgusting remains of putrid frogs.

A noble river was at length descried, seventy or more yards broad, and covered with swarms of pelicans and wildfowl that had flocked thither for refuge and refreshment. Involuntarily Sturt and his companions thought of the westward-flowing river which they sought, the Desired Blessing of their dreams.

All difficulties seemed now at an end ; the party eagerly descended the steep banks to quench their thirst in the ample waters ; but at the first draught of the clear liquid a cry of amazement and horror burst from their parched lips. The stream was salt, its taste like that of the ocean.

But even the sore disappointment of the travellers nursed the delusive hope of an inland sea. That hope likewise failed when springs of brine were found in the bed of the stream ; and Sturt turned back to save the lives of the expedition, first naming the river which had promised so much and given so little the Darling, after the stern Governor of New South Wales.

The return journey was a race with death by thirst. Drought still cursed the unhappy country ; the Darling, which they struck again ninety miles nearer to its source, was as salt as before ; the Macquarie was now no more than a chain of ponds. ' Rivers ceased to flow,' wrote Sturt afterwards, ' and sheets of water disappeared. Vegetation seemed annihilated ; the largest forest trees were drooping, and many were dead. The emus, with outstretched necks, gasping with thirst, in vain searched the river channels for water ; and the native dog, so thin that it could hardly walk, seemed to implore some merciful hand to despatch it.'

The retreat to Sydney was at length accomplished, and

Sturt summed up the results of his journey. He had found good land parched with drought, he had shown that the Macquarie was a tributary of the great new river which he had discovered and called the Darling; but the further course of that mighty stream was a mystery. Did it lose itself in swamps, as Oxley had thought was the fate of the Macquarie? or was it indeed the Desired Blessing that should make its way at last to the wide ocean or feed some unknown inland sea?

Sturt's second journey a year later into the interior was an attempt to solve that question. Experience had taught him that it was difficult and of little use to follow the Macquarie, and he now decided to track the Murrumbidgee to the junction which he believed it made with the Darling, and then to follow the main stream to the end of its course.

The country he crossed at first surprised him by its richness; the Murrumbidgee he found 'a stream with strong current, whose waters, foaming and eddying among rocks, gave promise of a reckless course.' The scene was fair and even beautiful, the prospect hopeful; the aborigines hereabouts spoke of another and far larger river further west, in comparison with which even the Murrumbidgee, no insignificant stream, was as a puny creek. Sturt did not discredit the report, which became more probable when he passed the junction where the Lachlan, Oxley's river, emptied itself into the Murrumbidgee—a proof that he was heading for some mighty watercourse that united all the rivers of south-eastern Australia.

But now the navigation became dangerous. The channel narrowed, the river increased in speed, and its course was obstructed by snags and fallen trunks of trees; more than once the boat was nearly wrecked. Yet after some miles of this precarious passage they were suddenly shot into a broad and noble river, which Sturt could not doubt was the great waterway of the south-east part of the continent. It yet

remained to discover its destination, but he was convinced that this new tributary was the Darling. The Union Jack was now hoisted amid the cheers of the whole party, on a spot which no white man had ever trod before ; and the great united body of waters brought down by the Darling and the Murrumbidgee was named the Murray, after Sir George Murray, the Colonial Secretary of the day.

Trouble with the aborigines now threatened ; but Sturt, who was able to boast in later years that all his great journeys had never cost a life, saw with relief that the purpose of the hostile blacks was frustrated by the urgent remonstrances of a friendly chief who had preceded them down stream.

As they descended the noble river, the character of the country more than once changed. ' The banks assumed the most beautiful columnar regularity as of Corinthian pillars and capitals ; elsewhere they resembled the time-worn battlements of a feudal castle, or showed like petrified waterfalls ; in other parts the cliffs towered above, and against their base the water dashed like sea waves. They shone like dead gold in the sun's rays, forming for a mile or two an unbroken wall on both sides of the river. In these cliffs the eagle found a sanctuary, and eagles, cockatoos, and other birds soared as mere specks ' above the eager party, which now pushed forward in the expectation of a speedy and successful end to their journey.

Lower down, the river, which had been flowing steadily westwards, suddenly turned almost due south ; seagulls were now seen, and a south-west gale sent a swell up the river which drenched the party with spray. The sea was near.

It was clear that the river had a southerly outlet, yet the south coast of Australia had been carefully charted, and no great outflow of water found. Here then was a mystery ; but it was solved by the river broadening out into a lake,—which Sturt named Alexandrina, in honour of Alexandrina Victoria, the young heir to the British Crown—and from that

lake, which again broadened out into a long bay, there was no practicable channel to the ocean.

Thus the end of all was disappointment ; but disappointment tempered with the thought that thousands of miles of good new country had been found, and that one of the problems which puzzled Oxley and Hume had been solved. Another problem, the question of a second river basin in the far interior, and the existence of an inland sea, had been raised by the sudden descent of the Murray to the south ; but that problem could wait awhile.

But Sturt had now to consider his return to Sydney. To go back by the ocean he had so nearly reached was plainly impossible, for they could not get their boat across the bar that blocked the entrance of the Murray to the sea, and in any case the boat that had brought them safely down the river was not strong enough to battle with the long swell of the southern ocean. To wait until their little camp was sighted by a passing ship on its way to New South Wales might have meant years of delay and even possible disaster, for the aborigines of South Australia were none too friendly ; and Sturt was therefore faced with the tedious necessity of retracing his original course.

On that long and wearisome and dangerous retreat the great explorer records that his nerves gave way under the stress of continued hardship and anxiety, that he became captious, and at times found needless fault with his men, whose constitutions had already been severely tried by privation ; ‘ their arms were nerveless, their faces haggard, their persons emaciated, their spirits wholly sunk. From sheer weakness they frequently fell asleep at the oar.’ But the men murmured not, for they loved their leader well ; so careful, indeed, were they to add nothing to his distress that only when he was thought to be asleep did they complain of their pains and exhaustion. It is at such moments of crisis that the true leader reaps the reward of his past consideration.

One touching instance of devotion has been preserved. When rations were short, and even starvation seemed near, Sturt's men proved their affection by giving up all claim to the small stock of sugar which was one of the most valuable of the diminishing stores. The commander who can inspire such love deserves his success.

At last the party reached Sydney, and the news of their discoveries spread far and wide. Pioneer squatters again followed with their flocks and herds in the tracks of the explorers, and within six years the colony of South Australia was founded near the spot where Sturt had stood with his followers, a solitary party of white men at the useless and misshapen mouth of the greatest of antipodean rivers.

But to its discoverer, as to others in New South Wales, it was not yet certain that the Murray was the greatest of antipodean rivers. Sturt was yet to lead another expedition in search of the visionary waterway of the Desired Blessing and the phantom inland sea that haunted his imagination, only to find that imagination and desire had played him false.

And meanwhile other explorers were pushing forward with the work of discovery in other parts of the still unknown continent. Between 1831 and 1836 Major Mitchell Other had captained several official surveying expedi- Explorers. tions which mapped out a large part of the country watered by the Darling and much of the future colony of Victoria; George Grey, the future Governor of South Australia and New Zealand, had explored part of the west coast in 1839; and Edward John Eyre, a man of strong character, whose firmness of purpose was shown in his suppression of the Morant Bay rising in Jamaica many years later,¹ had struck up country from Adelaide in 1838 on a pioneer journey of exploration into the unknown territories of central South Australia.

¹ See vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. ii.

Two years later Eyre again made his way into the high lands of the interior from Adelaide. But as he pressed further north he found that here was naught save disappointment. The great Lake Torrens, named after one of the promoters of the South Australian Company, was no more than a 'dry bed covered over with a crust of salt, forming one unbroken sheet of pure white, and glittering brilliantly in the sun.' Such waters as it had were only mud and salt, the surrounding desert bare and dry, the rocks and stones the 'scorched barren withered scoria of a volcanic region.' At one point, where Eyre hoped to find the water his party now sorely needed, he was again repulsed by dry bare hills; and naming the spot Mount Deception he turned back. Other travellers were to explore the dreary region of the Stony Desert and Illusion Plains which lay beyond,¹ and to bring back no better report than Eyre.

But Eyre was not of the stuff that is easily conquered. If he could not get further north, he could at least go west; and sending all his party save one white man and three native boys back to Adelaide, Eyre started on the long ride to King George's Sound in West Australia.

The enterprise was perilous and even foolhardy, for the country before him was unknown, and the little band had hardly any provisions. And almost at the outset they were forced to travel across a hundred miles of desert, without a drop of water in its whole extent; during this initial march the sheep accompanying the expedition went six, and the horses five, days without water, and both almost wholly without food, for the little grass they found was so dry and withered that the parched and thirsty animals could not eat it after the second day.

A few days later they drank the last drop of stored water; for the remainder of the journey they were forced to rely on chance supplies obtained from holes dug in the sand—a terrible predicament in that droughty country.

¹ Illusion Plains were so named by the explorer Parry in 1858.

But now an even worse disaster menaced Eyre. His single white companion was shot by one of the native boys, who deserted with another of the party ; and Eyre was left alone, ' at the dead hour of night, in the wildest and most inhospitable waste of Australia, with the fierce wind raging in unison with the scene of violence.' No white man had ever set foot in the country that lay ahead ; and Eyre's previous journeys had taught him something of the perils and privations of pioneering work in that continent. Yet he would not turn back to Adelaide.

Six hundred miles of unknown country lay ahead ; Eyre had only a single rifle, four gallons of water, forty pounds of flour, and some tea and sugar as provisions for the journey, which he had to make with one native follower whose fidelity could not be relied upon. The remainder of his small supplies had been stolen by the two deserters.

The murderer and his companion dogged the solitary white man and the black for a time, and then disappeared into the desert ; and for days on end Eyre now pushed forward through an unchanging wilderness. No water was found for a week, and the wretched horses suffered agonies of thirst, while Eyre himself could only drink sparingly of his own small and irregularly replenished store.

In time the country improved a little, and water was found here and there ; but the weary traveller was now forced to follow the coast-line along the full length of the high cliffs that form the shores of the Great Australian Bight.

But therein lay salvation. In Thistle Grove a ship was descried at anchor, and provisions were obtained to replenish the explorer's stock, now absolutely exhausted. Refreshed and somewhat strengthened, Eyre pushed on again ; and, on 8th July 1841, after a six weeks' journey across an unknown and inhospitable land, Eyre reached the city of Albany on King George's Sound. Three years earlier he had marched from

The
Southern
Overland
Route com-
pleted, 1841.

Port Phillip to Adelaide ; he could now claim to be the first white man who had performed the great feat of crossing the wide continent from east to west.

Eyre's wonderful ride had thrown no light upon the great river of the Desired Blessing, except to prove beyond a doubt, what was already generally believed, that no such stream emptied itself from the southern shores of Australia. There still remained the northern and north-west coasts, and much was done to explore those parts during the next few years. In 1845 Ludwig Leichhardt, a German naturalist, made a great journey from the Darling Downs around the Gulf of Carpentaria to Port Essington on the Northern Territory, in which for a long distance he followed the coast closely, discovering much good country and many fine rivers ; but none of these was great enough to foster the delusive hope that any main artery into the interior had been found.

Along the route which Leichhardt had mapped out prospectors and squatters soon made their way to new country ; but Leichhardt himself perished in a subsequent and more ambitious journey two years later. It was his expressed intention to cross the continent to Perth in West Australia ; but neither he nor any of his companions, nor any trace of their route through the interior, were ever found. They disappeared from human ken as absolutely as if they had been snatched up into heaven, and one traveller after another sought them through the vast spaces of the central Australian deserts in vain. Their fate is one of the unexplained mysteries that haunt the page of history.¹

Less mysterious was the equally tragic end of Kennedy,

¹ It has been suggested that the whole expedition was swept away by one of the floods that rush down from Queensland towards Lake Eyre with irresistible force after heavy rains. But even a flood that destroyed them would probably have washed up some remains of their very considerable equipment.

spearred by the aborigines as he made his way towards Cape York on the extreme north of the continent in 1848. Others who traversed the shores of the Northern Territory and tropical Queensland had better fortune; but their travels definitely determined that the great river of the Desired Blessing was not here. The Daly and Victoria Rivers, which flow into the Indian Ocean south of Melville Island, and which some sanguine spirits had thought to be the stream they sought, proved only local rivers; it was clear that the Desired Blessing must be found, if found at all, in the narrowing spaces of the unknown west.

In the year 1845 the great maritime survey of all the coasts of Australia was completed, and no large estuary was anywhere discovered; but this did not dissuade those who remembered that the first survey of the southern shores of the continent had yielded no sign of the Murray River. And Charles Sturt, the discoverer of that great stream, had already set out on his last and most wonderful journey through the interior, in search of the greater waterway and vast inland sea whose existence was still the first article of his geographic faith.

When Sturt left the young city of Adelaide for the interior, on 10th August 1844, he hoped that the short space of two years would suffice for the exploration of the greater part of the continent. Little did he realise the difficulties and dangers ahead—difficulties so serious that they robbed the expedition of nearly all save negative results, dangers so grave that the recital of only a portion of Sturt's fearful experiences turned his wife's hair white in a single night. That last expedition sufficed to show, as nothing else perhaps could have shown, the sheer terror and the silent cruelty of a great Australian drought—a terror and a cruelty that many another man unknown to fame had suffered through long months in which gaunt ruin had stalked beside him waking, and watched beside him sleeping,

**Sturt's Last
Expedition,
1844.**

a terror and a cruelty that left its marks deep on Australian life and literature.¹

At first, indeed, all promised well on the journey. So far as the bend of the Darling at Cawndilla, Sturt and his company were on easy and familiar ground ; but once they struck away from the stream their difficulties began. ' Prepared as I was for a bad country,' wrote the experienced leader of the party, ' I was not prepared to find it so bad.' There was no water ; yet they pushed on, hoping that Lake Torrens, whose dreary saline marshes had killed Eyre's hopes years before, might yet communicate with some more central body of water—the phantom inland sea of which Sturt ever dreamed.

Immense flights of bitterns, cranes, and other aquatic birds overhead encouraged the hope of a great lake further inland to the north-west. The explorers cast about for signs of better country to guide them on their way, but none appeared : rivers, creeks, and ponds were drying up ; and at length they came to rest at Rocky Glen, where was one of the few sheets of permanent water in all that desiccated land.

Here they pitched their tents, unaware that advance and retreat were alike cut off. For six weary months, from 27th January 1845 until the 17th of the following July, the explorers were locked up in this desolate heated region in an oasis of the great desert of Central Australia. Around them in the wilderness of sand was the stillness of death ; no living creature but the ant dwelt in that fearful country ; and death itself was presently to visit the now helpless party that had pried into the hidden secrets of a dying land.

Soon afterwards the thousands of birds that had made the glen their home flew away ; in a single day parrots, pigeons, bitterns, cockatoos all deserted the place, and a silence as of death now invaded the oasis as well as the surrounding desert.

¹ I need not refer to the many mentions of drought in previous and subsequent pages of this volume. Its influence on Australian poetry is noticed in the next chapter.

Some of the men had fallen ill, and scurvy appeared in the camp. James Poole, Sturt's chief assistant, was sick, lingered for months, and died; his body rests in the desert to this day. Others seemed likely to follow him into the unknown, if no release came; and of release there was no sign.

The heat was now terrible, and there were no dews. One day the thermometer, which marked 137 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade, rose to 157 degrees in the sun; and for three months the mean temperature was over 101 degrees. Under the effect of this terrific heat all vegetation parched; every screw in the boxes was drawn; horn handles and combs split; the lead dropped out of the pencils, and it was difficult to write or draw, so rapidly did the fluid dry in the pens and brushes. 'Our hair,' says Sturt, 'as well as the sheep's wool, ceased to grow, and our nails became as brittle as glass.'

In the early days of their imprisonment a few poor natives crawled into the glen for refreshment, and assured the explorers that nowhere else was water to be found; but then for a long time no other human being was seen. Five months later, an ancient half-dead black man crawled into the oasis alone, quite exhausted with hunger and thirst. He took his fill, slept twenty-four hours; ate, drank, and rested again; and departed once more into the void—a living ghost in the dead wilderness.

But before he left he told Sturt of a great sheet of water, whose waves were greater than a man's head, and whose fish too large to pass through the net. Sturt now dreamed again of the phantom sea; but for the time there was no means of reaching it.

Not until near the middle of July did the rain come. At first no more than a few drops, it increased the following day to a downpour; and the sound of its ripple through the gully was sweeter music to the imprisoned travellers than the softest and most beautiful melody that ever moved a soul to tears.

It was indeed the message of deliverance ; but deliverance to Sturt meant only the opportunity for further advance into the wilderness.

But the demon of drought pursued him now, as ever through his career. This was no land of woods and water into which he rode, such as had greeted the pioneers in Canada a century before ;¹ but another dreary district of desert and desolation. For he had struck the fearful and forbidding region which has since been known as the Stony Desert. Twenty miles the travellers toiled over stupendous and almost insurmountable sand-ridges of a fiery red ; these, ' like headlands projecting into the sea, abutted upon an immense plain, where, but for a line of low trees far to the north-east, and one bright red sand-hill shining in the sunlight, not a feature broke the dead level, the gloomy purple hue. Not a blade of vegetation grew on this forbidding plain, covered with stones from four to eight inches long, of indurated quartz rounded by attrition² and coated by oxide of iron—an adamantine plain on which the horses left no track.'

When they had passed over this appalling place, they still found the surface rent and torn by the intense heat ; still there was no water, but only thick black mud where water had once been. By this time Sturt had at last given up all hope of the inland sea he sought ; it seemed indeed a phantom of the mind, a mirage of desire that fled before him as he struggled through a country than which Dante himself could hardly have pictured any worse for the torture of poor erring souls.

Yet near them was in truth the inland sea, or what remained of it after a long cycle of continuous drought. For the travellers struck a creek which had not failed—Eyre's Creek

¹ See vol. iii. bk. x. ch. iii.

² Sturt believed, as did everybody else at that time, that this was the bed of an ancient sea. Professor Gregory has shown (*The Dead Heart of Australia*) that this formation is due to the absence, not the presence of water.

they named it, but it has since been called the Diamantina—and this they followed till it too died away in a dead wilderness. Sixteen miles beyond was another region of forbidding desert, gigantic ridges of blood-red sand, clothed with the dreaded prickly spinifex, a miserable bush of grass which only thrives on desolation ; and all around them and beyond them were the salt snow-white beds of waterless lagoons and dry salt creeks like huge shining serpents writhing through the gloomy landscape.

The Inland
Sea of
Sturt's
Desire.

At this point, four hundred and seventy geographical miles north of Mount Arden, Sturt marked his furthest, and returned. Had the explorers pushed on through that fearful region in the hopeless hope of reaching the northern coast all would infallibly have been lost.

But at the other end of the Diamantina lay Lake Eyre,¹ the inland sea of Pliny's prophecy, of old-time fable, of native legend,² and of Sturt's desire. Yet this was no Desired Blessing, but a sheer curse ; its low and sunken swamps had but little semblance to the 'strange deep blue waters on which boat never swam, and over which flag never floated,' that Sturt had looked to find. 'Lake Eyre,' said a later traveller in that region,³ 'was terrible in its death-like stillness and vast expanse of unbroken sterility. The weary wanderer who, when in want of water, should unexpectedly reach its shores, might turn away with a shudder from a scene which shut out all hope. He could hide his head in the sand-hills and meet his fate with calmness and resignation ; but to set his foot on Lake Eyre would be like cutting himself off from the common lot of human beings.'

From time to time vast floods rushed down the creeks from Queensland to Lake Eyre ; but even the waters abhorred its

¹ The name Lake Eyre was first given to the lake in commemoration of the explorer Eyre, in an anonymous article in the *South Australian Register* in 1860.

² See the first chapter of this volume.

³ Egerton Warburton.

surface, and vanished from that unfriendly basin. The lake had now no outlet,¹ but evaporation drained it of its streams; the whole place was a Dead Sea without water, a dumb land without man or bird or beast, or flower or tree, upon its treacherous swampy soil. And this was the heart of Australia!

Yet there were times when that ancient weary heart revived a little, when it pulsed again with brief desire; there were seasons, rare and brief and intermittent, when waters fresh and clear flushed those parched arteries and restored their living impulse. A few years after Sturt had turned away despairing from a land of desert the Lake Eyre district was the fertile home of streams and meadows, where sheep and cattle stations were founded and flourished, where the surveyor and the squatter were at work, and the busy hum of human industry was heard. But a few seasons more, and all this vanished; the waters failed, the droughts returned, and the desert that had quickened with new life was once more claimed by death.

Sturt therefore failed at the last in his search for an inland sea and a passage across Australia; but he pointed the way for others. Thirteen years after his despairing return from the middle Australian desert, one who had accompanied him thither, M'Dowall Stuart, decided to make another dash across the fearful solitudes of the interior.

Those who have once felt the passion for exploration seldom lose the fever of desire for fresh adventures into the unknown; and though Stuart was well aware of the risks he ran, the hope that he might be the first to cross Australia from north to south sustained him throughout. Three several times did he face the silence of the Stony Desert, the weird Illusion Plains, the terrors of Lake Eyre, and the illimitable

¹ Its original outlet is believed to have been by way of the Darling. But it has also been suggested that it emptied itself through Lake Torrens.

rolling plains of sand and spinifex and salt beyond ; and three several times did he return baffled and defeated. But at the last he conquered the desert that had conquered him and his master Sturt ; in 1862 he reached the northern shores.

The initials of the successful leader, J. M'D. S., were carved on the largest tree that could be found at the mouth of the Adelaide River, the spot where Stuart emerged ; he dipped his hands and feet in the sea, and on a place near by the Union Jack was hoisted, while the following record of achievement was set up at its foot :—

'South Australian Great Northern Exploring Expedition.—The exploring party, under the command of John M'Dowall Stuart, arrived at this spot on the 25th day of July 1862, having crossed the entire continent of Australia, from the Southern to the Indian Ocean, passing through the centre. They left the city of Adelaide on the 26th day of October 1861, and the most northern station of the colony on the 21st day of January 1862. To commemorate this happy event, they have raised this flag bearing his name. All well. God save the Queen.'

Stuart had his reward in the sudden revival of interest in northern Australia,¹ and the overland telegraph line from Adelaide to Port Darwin followed near the track which he had made ; but he paid for his achievement in ruined health. A few years later he lamented that 'eyesight and memory were so far gone that he was unable to compose a speech, or, indeed, to recollect many of the incidents that happened throughout the course of his explorations.' It was of little moment ; the memory that he had lost was kept alive by others.

But Stuart was not actually the first to cross Australia. Two travellers, Burke and Wills, had made the shorter journey from Melbourne to the southernmost point of the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1860. They reached the district known as the Plains of Promise without disaster early in February 1861 ; but to them, as to many another before and since, the first promise of

Burke and
Wills also
cross
Australia,
1861.

¹ See bk. xx. ch. ii.

success was a delusive mockery. On the return journey supplies gave out, water was lacking, and the two brave men who were the first to cross the continent both paid for their victory with their lives. Wills perished of starvation in the Central Australian desert, after hardships cheerfully and even jovially borne ;¹ his companion outlived him but a few days. Burke 'walked till he dropped,' recorded one of the few survivors ; but even at the last extremity he begged that no grave should be made for him, lest the labour of digging it should lessen the failing strength of his comrades, and diminish their chance of escape.²

The work of Burke and Wills, the travels of Stuart, the explorations of Gregory along the north coast about the same time, and the continuous trackings of squatters and overlanders driving their flocks and herds through the interior had now practically completed the task of exploration in the eastern half of Australia ; but westwards of Lake Eyre little was yet known of the interior. Apart from the coastal districts of West Australia, the enormous mass of that huge colony was still a blank upon the maps ; and the vacant space, which included hundreds of thousands of square miles of the earth's surface, was at

¹ The very last entry in his diary contains a comparison between his own helpless condition and that of the luckless Micawber 'waiting for something to turn up.'

² It is worthy of note that camels, which had been introduced in Australia in 1846, were employed in this expedition ; a few years later they were again used in laying the overland telegraph line. The horse was not well adapted for exploration in the Australian desert ; 'we ascertained by painful experience,' wrote Forrest in 1874, 'that a horse requires water at least once in twelve hours, and suffers greatly if that period of abstinence is exceeded. A camel, however, will go for ten or twelve days without drink, without being much distressed. The necessity of obtaining water for the horses entailed upon us many wearying deviations from the main route and many disappointments, beside great privation and inconvenience to man and beast.'

In spite of their resources being greater than those of other expeditions into the interior, Burke and Wills hardly stand in the front rank as explorers. They owe their fame more to their tragic deaths than to their real achievements.

once a direct challenge and an open incentive to the imaginations of men.

There were some who still expected to find in this unexplored territory the great inland sea of old report, now sadly shrunken and diminished from the brave estimates of early days ; a few still hoped for the great river of the Desired Blessing, whose imaginary waters had eluded Oxley and Sturt and Stuart and the rest. And the squatter looked for illimitable pastures, great rolling downs of grass like the soft swelling breasts of English Sussex by the sea ; the covetous expected gold or precious stones, the statesman thought of new and ampler homes for the cramped and crowded people of Europe ; while the adventurous—for the love of adventure survived the staid commercial spirit of the Victorian age, as the love of beauty survived the hideousness of its industrial cities—the adventurous looked, as of old, for strange accidents and happenings in the unknown.

It was in the hope of realising some of these expectations that John Forrest,¹ a young surveyor in West Australia, left the capital city of Perth on 18th March 1874 on an official tour of exploration. Forrest had already proved his mettle at such work on two occasions ; he had headed one of the many search parties that sought the remains of the Leichhardt expedition, and he had performed that terrific journey across the full length of the Great Australian Bight which had nearly killed Eyre in 1840.

Forrest
crosses
from West
to East,
1874.

On this occasion it was intended that Forrest, who was accompanied by his brother Alexander and a well-equipped party, should attempt to traverse the whole colony from Perth to the overland telegraph line that had just been laid between Adelaide and Port Darwin—a feat that no other explorer had yet succeeded in accomplishing.

¹ Afterwards Sir John Forrest, Premier of West Australia, and eventually a member of the Commonwealth Government.

Some part of the country inland from Perth was of course already familiar to West Australian settlers, and Gosse, a South Australian traveller, had explored a fair stretch of country westwards of the telegraph line; but the whole intervening space, to the extent of more than five hundred miles, was still entirely unknown. It was hardly possible that Forrest's journey over so enormous a district should prove entirely barren of results; even less likely did it seem that good soil and permanent water, those most pressing needs of the Australian colonist, should be lacking throughout the whole vast span of the greatest of the divisions of the continent.

During the first six weeks of their journey the explorers followed the course of the Murchison River up-country. The route thus far presented no difficulties; much of the country was beautifully grassed and fit for settlement, and the progress of the expedition was generally rapid.

But early in May, and about three hundred miles from the coast, the river shrank to the size of a small brook, and the mountain range in which it took its rise was passed; and from that time the dangers of the journey began. The supply of water failed, and the travellers were forced to depend on stray pools formed by rain¹ in the hollows of the granite rocks with which the country was strewn. The route now lay through thickets and scrub, and the dreaded spinifex, that fatal sign of drought and desolation, was encountered by the expedition.

To the south, however, good open land was seen, well grassed and wooded with clumps of immense white gum trees; and later this stretched across the line of march, while creeks and minor tributaries of the Murchison were found, which supplied the animals with food and water.

¹ No part of Australia is absolutely rainless. Even in the driest and most arid parts there is never less than six inches of rain per annum, according to Professor Gregory. But it soon evaporates.

It was noticed, however, as an omen of misfortune that none of the streams were permanent, and in a year of drought it was clear that they would fail.

But Forrest had better luck or better country than Sturt and Stuart ; for a few marches further on a number of shallow pools were found, and these were but the prelude to splendid springs welling up in the bed of a river twelve feet deep and twenty chains long—an excellent place for water. Here at the Kennedy Creek both water and feed were permanent and unlimited ; and equally good supplies were found at the Weld Springs, further east, ten days later.

At this point the travellers rested for a week, and it was well they did ; for the country ahead was of very different character, mere barren desert, often as flat and level as the sea, and covered as far as the eye could reach with spinifex.

An occasional salt-lake or sand-hill hardly varied the eternal monotony of sand and spinifex, spinifex and sand ; the horses fell ill, dropped, and were abandoned one by one ; the travellers themselves grew feeble and almost lost heart as they pushed on through the dreadful wilderness. The only thing that saved the expedition was the occasional discovery of water holes in the granite rocks ; but sometimes two or three days would elapse and no such reservoir would reveal itself, and sometimes—what was far worse—those water holes were empty even when found.

This was the terrible country that had driven Gosse back when he attempted to cross it from east to west. And now it seemed likely to drive Forrest back also ; but a retreat had by this time become almost as dangerous as an advance.

At the beginning of August the whole party was in grave peril, and even such chance supplies of water as were found from time to time were now drying up ; a drought had come upon the land, and there came a time when travellers and horses alike were reduced to swallowing the salt mud that was the only substitute for water in this parched country.

Long ranges of hills were passed, but everywhere was the everlasting sand and spinifex on all sides, a land hopeless, repulsive, dead. Mile after mile and day after day the party toiled onwards through the month of August; September came, the antipodean winter waned, and ever as they marched the invisible electric line of the overland telegraph came nearer and nearer. . . .

At last a river bed was reached. It was the Marryat, a stream which Gosse had passed; but that stream, which sometimes flooded the country for miles around, was low and feeble, a mere narrow broken thread, in that dreadful season. It was a sign, however, that Forrest's difficulties were near an end.

Yet it was not until the twenty-seventh day of September that a thin line of wire ahead told the explorers their work was done. Three days later they fell in with an official station of the telegraph line, and thence the road to Adelaide was easy.

The expedition, one of the longest and most memorable in the annals of Australian exploration, had shown what could be done by men and horses to cross the desert; but it had also shown, in Forrest's opinion, what could not be done. From his experience of the country, he gave it as his view that the only part fit for permanent colonisation was the district from the coast to the head of the Murchison River; from that point to the eastern boundary of West Australia, a thousand miles, was useless. Even the springs, oases, and occasional strips of well-grassed country were so isolated that it would never pay to stock them.

With Forrest's expedition and the laying of the overland telegraph line in 1872 the history of Australian exploration on the grand scale comes to a close. Other men certainly followed, leaders often of great ability and courage, who filled in the vacant spaces left by their predecessors along the coast and in the interior;

among these may be mentioned Ernest Giles, the discoverer of the dreary mudflat which bears the too exalted name of Lake Amadeus. He, like Forrest, traversed the barren lands of Western Australia, lands where, in his own words, 'the very sight of the country was enough to daunt a man and kill a horse'; and his track is marked by such depressing names as Desolation Glen and Mount Destruction. But in the main the work was done; the bold outlines of Australia were known, its hopes and disappointments certified upon the maps, its possibilities understood and in places realised, its deficiencies noted and admitted.

The old hope of an inland sea had long since vanished; the great river of the Desired Blessing which every traveller sought had been sought in vain. Instead were sand and salt and spinifex, and spinifex and salt and sand over large areas—the hopeless horizon of a dreary desert stretched across the middle of a continent.

Lack of water was the curse of the Australian interior, for the soil of the desert was often good, and after a heavy downpour the growth of grass and seeds was rapid and spontaneous. But if drought had eaten into the heart of the continent as a sneer eats into the heart of a little child, if deserts had taken the place of fruitful gardens as indifference will take the place of love, there remained yet enormous territories with manifold opportunities for the squatter and the settler to occupy.

At most parts around the coast, in most parts of the eastern half of Australia, and in many fertile oases in the West Australian desert there was room for man and his flocks and herds; and the pioneer squatters soon began to follow the explorers into the new country. Oxley was the forerunner of pastoral settlement in the interior of New South Wales. Cunningham and Leichhardt showed the way to the north and south of Queensland. A few years after Mitchell explored Australia Felix,

Colonisa-
tion follows
Explora-
tion.

and Sturt made his way down the Murray to Lake Alexandrina, the colonies of Victoria and South Australia were founded. The expedition of Burke and Wills led to the foundation of Burke Town on the Gulf of Carpentaria. Kennedy's tragic death in the far north led likewise indirectly to a small settlement at Cape York. And when Forrest passed along the track which Eyre had left thirty years before on the desolate coasts of the Great Australian Bight, he found, besides the bleached skeleton of one of Eyre's horses, a few solitary and isolated British homesteads already planted on those dismal and forbidding shores.

Everywhere save in the Australian desert settlements, small or great, had been founded by the close of the nineteenth century; the desert needed but water to make it habitable, and the settlements needed but time and tending to make them grow.¹

CHAPTER II

THE INDIVIDUAL STATES: 1850-80²

WHILE great explorers were daring danger and death in the Australian desert, some other men, as adventurous in thought if not in deed, were endeavouring to explore the equally barren

¹ There were vast deposits of subterranean water in Australia, and in the utilisation of these lay the best hope for the future. The inland sea, in fact, which Sturt and the rest had sought lay underground. The subject is discussed in Gregory's *Dead Heart of Australia*.

² Authorities.—A number of writers, whose length is usually greater than their merit, discuss the Australian colonies during this period. Among others may be mentioned Pridden's *Australia* (1843), a poor compilation; Mackenzie's *Ten Years' Practical Experience* (1845); Hodgson's *Reminiscences*, a settler who was swindled in Australia and therefore pessimistic as to its future; Harris's *Settlers and Convicts* (1847); Haygarth's *Recollections of Bush Life* (1848), an excellent little work; Bryne's *Twelve Years' Wanderings* (1848), of moderate interest; *Perils, Pleasures, and Pastimes of an Emigrant* (1849), unredeemed rubbish; Angas's *Savage Life and Scenes* (1850), occasionally useful; Melville's *Present State of Australasia* (1851); Mrs. R. Lee's *Adventures in Australia* (1851), an extraordinarily stupid book; Lancelott's *Australia as it is* (1852),

spaces of the unknown future of the antipodes ; and where Sturt and the rest had sought their Desired Blessing in a great river and an inland sea that had no real existence, at least one political prophet of the day foretold the foundation of a type of society that the passage of time has shown few signs of fulfilling.

A remarkable but long-forgotten pamphlet, published in the year 1877 by Marcus Clarke, one of the first Australian writers to forsake the well-worn rut of common-
place for the brambled path that leads to litera-
ture, contained a fantastic prophecy as to the future of the English people in the island continent.

A Prophecy
of 1877.

‘The Australians of the time were moulded,’ said Clarke, ‘from the best bone and sinew of Cornwall, the best muscle of Yorkshire, the keenest brains of cockneydom’ ; and he foretold that they would grow into a self-reliant, healthy nation. So healthy, indeed, were the people in his opinion—in spite of bad teeth and ruined digestions—that they would foster no genius, for ‘genius is to the physiologist but another form of scrofula.’ Yet if they lacked that supreme alloy of mental power and physical decay, Clarke expected that the Australian nation of the future would be clever, but perverse and irritable. They would also be selfish, and prone to indulge in mercenary marriage, if not inclined to take an altogether material view of life.

fairly useful ; Mundy’s *Our Antipodes* (1852), light and superficial, but bright ; Saunders’s *Our Australian Colonies* (1853) ; Mossman and Bannister’s *Australia Visited and Revisited* (1853), both mediocre ; Sidney’s *Gallops and Gossips in the Bush* (1854), of some interest ; Willmer’s *The Draper in Australia* (1856), as dull as its print is small ; Norton’s *Australian Essays* (1857), and Rowe’s *Peter Possom’s Portfolio* (1858), both very poor ; Atkins’s *Wanderings of the Clerical Ulysses* (1859), very stupid ; Mereweather’s *Diary of a Working Clergyman* (1859), tedious but useful ; and *Social Life and Manners*, by a Resident (1861), moderate.

There are several volumes of pamphlets relating to Australia in the Royal Colonial Institute, which are of greater value than more pretentious tomes ; and the early volumes of the Australian periodical press are full of information.

Politically he anticipated that a republic would be founded in the temperate southern regions of Australasia, with its intellectual capital in Victoria, its fashionable centre in Sydney, and its administrative headquarters in New Zealand. In the northern territories he considered that a stupendous and luxurious tropical civilisation of the Asiatic pattern was likely to prevail.

But the author appears to have become suddenly impatient of his dream-creation, for he declares that in five hundred years the Australian nation would be extinct; and with that catastrophe the vision of the future abruptly closes.

It is one of the minor functions of the historian to discredit the prophet; and it must be admitted that Marcus Clarke was more successful in describing his adopted country than in forecasting its future.¹ The development of Australia has proceeded, and seems likely to proceed, on different lines from those which he anticipated; and at the beginning of the twentieth century hardly even the most dismal pessimist had any serious belief that the new English nation which had just succeeded in getting itself born need pay much heed to

¹ Clarke has caught more of the true spirit of Australia in a few sentences than less gifted writers in a whole book. 'The Australian mountain forests,' he said, 'are funereal, secret, stern. They seem to stifle in their black gorges a story of sullen despair. No tender sentiment is nourished in their shade. In other lands the dying leaf is mourned, the falling leaves drop lightly on his bier. In the Australian forests no leaves fall. The savage winds shout among the rock-clefts. From the melancholy gums strips of white bark hang and rustle. The very animal life is either grotesque or ghastly. Grey grass kangaroos hop noiselessly over the coarse grass. Flights of white cockatoos stream out, shrieking like evil souls. The sun suddenly sinks, and the mopokes burst out with horrible peals of semi-human laughter. . . . Some see no beauty in our trees without shade, our flowers without perfume, our birds who cannot fly, or our beasts who have not yet learned to walk on all fours. But the dweller in the wilderness acknowledges the subtle charm of this fantastic land of monstrosities. He becomes familiar with the beauty of loneliness. Whispered to by the myriad tongues of the wilderness, he learns the language of the barren and the uncouth, and can read the hieroglyphics of haggard gum-trees, blown into odd shapes, distorted with fierce hot winds, or cramped with cold nights, when the southern cross freezes in a cloudless sky of icy blue.'

the chances of an untimely death.¹ It may therefore be useful to turn from the realms of imagination to those of fact, and to construct a picture of the past which can be verified, in place of a vision of the future which it requires an act of faith to credit.

In the year 1861, when Australia had already been divided into the five political states of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and West and South Australia, each **Australia** independent of the other in local affairs, but all **in 1860.** alike acknowledging the British Crown, the total white population of the continent was calculated at 1,076,666. A few thousands among that million were convicts who had either served their term, or were still serving it in West Australia; but the majority were free immigrants, and the proportion was rising in their favour year by year.

Of those immigrants a large number were poor men, with little or no capital beyond their health and the will to work; but that capital of blood and backbone was a priceless asset in the forming of a new nation. Very many had been assisted to emigrate by charitable or philanthropic institutions in England, or by the various colonial governments in Australia. They left their native field or factory in England, usually while in the full vigour of young manhood: but few ever returned home; and many who prospered in the new southern world had no wish to leave their adopted country for any longer period than to visit the well-remembered scenes of boyhood, and to greet old schoolfellows with the handshake that can bridge a separation of half a lifetime.

The white population, as is usual in a country which is still in the early stages of settlement, showed a large excess of men over women. In New South Wales, the mother colony, there were fifty-six males to forty-three females; the proportion was much the same in the four younger Australian states. And since more men than women arrived

¹ But see bk. xxii. for the declining birth-rate.

every year in the colonies, the normal tendency of the birth-rate to restore the equality of the sexes was frustrated ; the proportion of males to females, in fact, was much the same at the end as in the middle of the century.

The distribution of this population was mainly along the coast of Australia. The interior of the continent was not yet thoroughly explored, and no white settlement of any size had been founded more than a few miles from the sea. Thousands of acres of inland country were still utterly uninhabited ; and most people passively accepted the idea that what Sir John Franklin had called ' the dreary and uncultivated regions of New Holland,'¹ would remain dreary and uncultivated for ever. None ventured to prophesy that the arid plains in the middle of the continent would ever resound to the hum of human industry ; none expected that they would ever be more than a dry forbidding waste, a southern Sahara surrounded by a belt of fertile and thickly populated territories.

But even along the coasts of Australia the colonies of the white man were as yet little more than scattered settlements. They were situated mainly on the eastern side of the continent ; the south was uninhabited save in the districts around Port Phillip and, further west, in the neighbourhood of the capital city of Adelaide. The west coast was hardly occupied at all, except for a few miles in the vicinity of Perth ; and save for a remote and struggling outpost at Port Darwin, the vast northern territories were almost unknown and untrodden by Europeans.²

Practically the whole white population lived in the temperate regions of Australia. The new state of Queensland could reckon no more than 30,000 inhabitants within its borders ; but these were located on the Darling Downs and around Brisbane, in both cases many miles to the south of the tropic

¹ Franklin on 6th August 1804. Quoted in Traill's *Life of Franklin*.

² See bk. xx. ch. ii. for Port Darwin and the Northern Territory.

of Capricorn. New South Wales, which totalled 357,978 inhabitants, and Victoria, with a population considerably larger but younger and less settled, both lay entirely within the temperate zone, and together contained the bulk of the English people in Australia ; and the state of South Australia—which was given control over the Northern Territory in the year 1863—possessed 124,112 inhabitants in 1860, its population having doubled within the previous decade.

Australia as a whole was thoroughly British in blood and race. More than ninety-three per cent. of its people were of British birth or ancestry. One man in four had been born in England. Fifteen men in every hundred were Irish ;¹ a large number of these had emigrated from that unfortunate island at the time of the potato famine in 1845. Five men in every hundred were Scots ; and Wales contributed a smaller quota, of one in every two hundred and twenty. There were a few Germans and others of foreign origin ; and a number of Chinese, whose increase soon became an object of serious comment and legislation.

Nearly half the white population of Australia was Australian born, and the proportion naturally increased with every year, until in 1881 it was more than sixty per cent. The steady growth of a native white stock was not without its influence on the growth of a sentiment of national union throughout the continent, which eventually resulted in the foundation of the Australian Commonwealth in 1901.

But during the next thirty years the five colonies were more intent on maintaining their independence of each other

¹ The Irish settlers were often very successful in Australia, largely because, as Dion Boucicault the actor remarked (Hogan's *Irish in Australia*) 'they got a chance there' of success, which they could hardly be said to have had under the old conditions in Ireland.

But some Irish immigrants, who brought Fenian traditions across the water with them, occasionally caused trouble. An Irish Fenian organisation that was domiciled in New Zealand announced that its members intended to assassinate the Governor of that country in 1868 (Bowen's *Thirty Years*) apparently for no specific reason, but on general principles. The object of their attentions promptly had them arrested.

than on cultivating any sentiment of political union. Each was jealous of the other; and although a few of the wiser men held that 'by becoming confederates so early in their career the Australian colonies would immensely economise their strength and resources,'¹ the majority of the people were strongly opposed to giving up those state rights which they had not possessed more than a few years. While far-seeing statesmen reported in favour of Australian union, the trend of public opinion was more accurately seen in the popularity of Separation Polkas, Separation Inns, and other quaint but significant indications of a desire for divided authority and control. Another generation was to elapse before the prospect of federation gained any real support from the community; and the three decades which succeeded the discovery of gold in Victoria were the high-water mark of antipodean provincialism.

Yet if each political unit distrusted its neighbour, and each provincial capital hated its upstart rivals, the real differences between the various colonies were slight and superficial. The fundamentals of union were present; only the disposition to unite was lacking. No broad distinction divided the social life of Melbourne from that of Sydney, or the squatters and agriculturists of Victoria from those of New South Wales. All were derived from the same stock, and had advanced on much the same lines; none had diverged much from the original pattern in the mother country.

It was observed, indeed, near the close of the century, that the influence of the Scottish immigrants was very pronounced in proportion to their numbers, and that 'in all parts of the country, in many towns, and conspicuously in Melbourne and Adelaide they controlled affairs and gave

¹ *Papers relating to a Federal Union of the Australian Colonies*, issued at Melbourne, 1862.

the prevalent tone to the community.' ¹ But in this matter Australia was only following the example of England, whose Government, Church, and commerce were very largely under the direction of Scotsmen during the same period.

In another aspect Australia likewise showed her likeness to Britain; but on this point one can only regret the resemblance. In the year 1860 the English colonies of the antipodes were essentially pastoral and agricultural. Three men in four were occupied on the land; and although the cities were already large and flourishing, they were no larger than the needs of a well-balanced community demanded. But they now began to grow at the expense of the rural districts, as the great industrial quarters of England were likewise growing; and this centralisation of population was a grave drawback to the development of Australia. The new settlers who arrived from England showed a preference for the town over the country; and more than fifty-seven per cent. of the increase of population in New South Wales between 1887 and 1891 remained in the capital. By the latter year one-third of the total population of that colony was domiciled in Sydney and its suburbs; and nearly half the total population of Victoria was domiciled in Melbourne.

Some part of this reluctance to leave the town for the country may undoubtedly be ascribed to the difficulty of obtaining land, a difficulty which impelled one emigrant to complain that the land laws of Australia were intended to let the rich man come in and keep the poor man out. But it is a significant fact that the tendency to congregate in the towns increased during the very years when the settlement of the small farmer on the land was rendered easy ² by special legislation. And the growth of the manufactures in the larger cities of the antipodes at this time, which was encouraged by a protective tariff, useful as it was for the develop-

¹ Article in *Scribner's Magazine*, February 1892.

² See bk. xxii.

ment of the nation as a whole, undoubtedly did something to check the progress of colonisation in the interior.

The terrible loneliness of bush and station life, 'the neutral tints of eucalyptic cloisterdom,' as Brunton Stephens described the monotonous existence on a remote Australian farm, had probably most to do with the growing preference for town over country life. It may not be true, as the same poet declared, that

'Soul cannot march to the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle;
Oh! for a touch of the palpitant world.'

But at least there are hundreds of men to whom the silent company of nature is an irksome solitude that is little better than a living death; and for such men a few months' experience in the wilds of the interior was enough to bring them back to Sydney or Melbourne for the remainder of their days.¹

The contrast between town and country life was probably more striking in Australia than in any other part of the world.

Life in the The capitals were centres of much gaiety and
Bush. some immorality; but in the bush a man was incessantly driven inwards upon himself. He was compelled to rely altogether upon his own resources; and sometimes his best-laid plans would be wrecked by a drought, or an epidemic among his flocks and herds.

His home might be anything from a well-built and extensive wooden mansion to a mere rough shanty, made of tree-trunks and roofed with galvanised iron, the whole structure being run up in a couple of days; his furniture might come from the best cabinet-shops of London, or it might consist of old packing-cases roughly nailed together to make a chair, a table, or a bed.

Access to the settler's home depended entirely on its

¹ The writer of an Australian pamphlet suggests that one of the reasons for leaving the bush for the town was the difficulty of finding suitable marriage partners.

situation. If it was within a hundred miles of the capital, the roads were generally good and safe ; but in travelling to some distant outposts the route became a rough track, and sometimes vanished altogether except for the indications afforded by a brand or ' blaze ' upon the trees ; while the danger of being attacked and robbed by bushrangers was an added anxiety.

In the towns there were good cars and omnibuses, and the carriages of the wealthier folk could challenge comparison with any in Europe ; but a few miles beyond those limits travelling on horseback was the only method of conveyance for man and woman alike. The horses of Australia were cheap and hardy, and a journey of thirty, fifty, or even seventy miles a day was not beyond their powers ; and their universal use made the English in the antipodes a race of horsemen second to none in the world.

Without his horse, indeed, the pioneer in the bush was helpless. It was impossible to traverse the long distances of the interior on foot ; and the first Australian railway, a short length of fifteen miles from Sydney, was not opened until 1855. Five years later, New South Wales only contained seventy miles of railways, which earned £11,841 in the twelvemonth. By 1881 the length of lines open in the mother colony reached 1041 miles ; but even then mechanical locomotion had by no means superseded the older method of travelling.

The stores that were necessary for the maintenance of the squatter or farmer with his household and employees were generally brought up once a year from the capital. Meat and bread could indeed be produced on the estate, and the Australians consumed much of both ; as much as twenty pounds of flesh was not considered an excessive allowance for a man, while the roughly baked ' damper ' of bread or the more luxurious loaf was washed down with copious draughts. Coarse, and generally badly cured tobacco was

also sometimes grown at home, but for other things the pioneer was dependent on the store at the nearest township, which was perhaps a hundred miles away, or on his agent, in Sydney or Melbourne. From one or other source he would buy enough chests of tea, bags of sugar and salt, and kegs of tobacco to last a twelvemonth; while other items in the consignment would include saddlery, horseshoes, shears, knives, castor oil, Epsom salts, manilla hats, shoddy cloth for the men, and print calico and cotton dresses for the women.¹

The prices charged for this strange medley of goods varied considerably in different places and years; but one store-keeper, who reckoned to make a profit of a hundred per cent., sold his tea for five shillings a pound, sugar at eightpence, and tobacco at six shillings. Boots cost anything from eleven to fourteen shillings; shirts were half-a-crown each; trousers from seven to twenty-five shillings; and blankets thirty shillings a pair. Bottled beer exported from England was priced at fourteen shillings a dozen, at which figure it must have been a drink which only the well-to-do could afford.

Wages were high, since labour was scarce and the labourer was therefore independent. An ordinary farm hand could earn from thirty to forty shillings a week, with his keep and lodging; a shepherd from fifty to sixty shillings. The latter occupation, however, was unpopular and of no good repute; the shepherds were said to be lazy and untrustworthy, while the work of guarding a large flock was excessively tedious. The paucity of shepherds, in fact, often compelled the squatter to pen his sheep together in large numbers, which was less

¹ There were not many clergymen in the bush; but doctors were still rarer visitors. In these circumstances the squatter was acting physician to all and sundry; but when his medicine chest contained nothing but castor oil and Epsom salts, it seems probable that his success in curing disease was more limited than his good will. If he chanced on a case of gastric ulcer, and used the two remedies alternately the luckless victim must have been speedily delivered by the more merciful hands of Death.

profitable and more conducive to the spread of epidemics and disease than dividing them into smaller flocks.

The sheep-shearer, whose occupation was seasonal, and who therefore moved from station to station, obtained higher wages, as more skill was required in this work; a good shearer could clip fifty to eighty or more sheep in a day. The herdsman and stockdriver likewise obtained good money.

Agriculture on the whole was held in far less favour than pastoral pursuits; and although 260,798 acres were under crop in the year 1860 in New South Wales alone, farming was generally rough and primitive, with no rotation of crops in practice, and no manure being used to fertilise the soil. As a rule, no more corn was grown than was necessary for the local demand; but of wool, the prime wealth of the colony, 12,809,362 pounds were exported from New South Wales, and its value was more than a quarter of the total exports of £5,072,020. The live stock of New South Wales reached the enormous amount of 251,497 horses, 2,408,586 cattle, 6,119,163 sheep, and 180,662 pigs.

The squatter who removed his flock from one pasture to another was aptly compared to an ancient patriarch.¹ The task was tedious and difficult, for it was necessary to watch the cattle day and night in order to prevent them from stampeding into the bush, or returning to their old haunts.²

¹ There is an anecdote of a well-meaning lady who thought to compliment a great squatter by comparing him to the patriarch Job. Her words had the opposite effect to what she had intended, for the squatter answered with offended dignity, 'I hope you do not mean to compare me to Job, who had only seven thousand sheep, whereas I have three hundred thousand. Job was a mere stringy-barker'—a colloquial term of contempt.

Some of the great Australian squatters possessed the enormous number of half-a-million sheep. When they played whist, it was a common thing to play for stakes of a sheep a point, and a bullock on the rubber.

² An Australian poet (T. W. Heney's *A Riverina Road*) has well described this nomadic life of the squatters:—

'A land of camps where seldom is sojourning,
Where men, like the dim fathers of our race,
Halt for a time, and next day, unreturning,
Fare ever on apace.'

But in a good year—and there were more good years than bad—the profits of the squatter were ample, and his life was easy. His market enlarged with the development of the new methods of transport, which enabled him to ship meat as well as wool to Europe ; his wealth gave him a strong position in Australia ; and his leisure left him free to pursue the open-air sports which were dear to his heart.

If he lived alone in the bush his establishment might, it is true, be rough, and his clothing coarse ; but he could easily afford the luxury of a holiday in Sydney or even in Europe. And if he married, his home often appeared to the casual traveller whom he entertained to contain every comfort which the most exigent could desire.

But the bush supported many more inhabitants than the wealthy pastoralists and their employees. Storekeepers sold their goods at convenient places, and sometimes realised a considerable fortune after a few years of trade ; the bush inn was a regular meeting-house of a more or less reputable kind, whose proprietor was assured of good profits from the bad drink which he supplied to his many thirsty customers. And the ‘sundowner,’ the aimless tramp who had renounced the shackles and the comforts of civilisation, wandered from station to station begging a meal and a bed from involuntary hosts at each successive sundown.

More important than these, who lived on the toil of their fellows, were the rising class of small farmers.

The small farmer was in direct competition with the great squatter. He had already begun to outnumber his powerful rival ; but his position on the whole was less fortunate. His profits were necessarily less, since his operations were conducted on a far smaller scale ; while if his losses were also less in a year of drought, his resources were correspondingly smaller, and he had far more difficulty in tiding over a bad season. Frequently, indeed, he found it a hard and bitter struggle to wring a subsistence from the soil. He

generally farmed his land himself, with the help of his wife and children; and to that extent his produce was grown more economically than that of the great squatter, who could seldom directly supervise the work of his many hands on an estate of perhaps a hundred miles square. And if the small farmer lived near one of the important centres of population, he had the advantage of a steady and accessible market for his goods.

But when he was located, as he often was, at some distance in the interior, the difficulties of transport were very serious to a man who could hardly afford to employ the labour necessary to carry his goods to the market, and who was seldom able to leave the farm himself. In any case, the small farmer had not sufficient resources to experiment as to the crops best suited to his soil; it was necessary for him to make an immediate profit, for he had no available capital with which to tide over the patient years of waiting while a great plan of development was maturing. He lived too near the margin of want to be able to take any risks; and since he could not risk the chance of a considerable loss, he never achieved a considerable success. He made a living, but he did no more.

While he remained isolated from his fellows, the small farmer made but little progress. In time, however, he learnt the virtues of co-operation; and co-operation eventually overcame some part of his difficulties.¹ The assistance of the Government, in opening experimental farms and in giving advice as to crops, likewise helped him; and the extension of the railway system did still more to bring the small cultivators into easy communication with their markets. In this way they gradually became a considerable power in Australia, and the growth of their influence is one of the notable features of antipodean social life in the later nineteenth century.

By common consent excessive drinking and swearing were

¹ See bk. xxii. for the policy of co-operation.

the chief vices of the bush. The sanguinary adjectives which were not unknown in London readily bore transportation with the other commodities of civilisation to the frontiers of the English-speaking world ; but the strength and occasional picturesqueness of his epithets probably concealed the real poverty of the settler's vocabulary. And the phrases which became consecrated by use in the rough language of the bush were sometimes even heard with horror by the more decorous or more restrained members of the colonial Parliaments ; but while the foulness of speech has largely vanished with the generation that imported it, a frankness which would be condemned at Westminster was still possible in the Commonwealth Senate in the twentieth century.¹

A more serious feature of Australian life than the coarseness of its language was the habitual insobriety of a large proportion of its people. For one traveller who reprobated those who ' had forgotten their mother tongue and adopted that of the devil,' a dozen complained of the prevailing drunkenness. ' Spiritual destitution and spirituous plenty ' was the mark of whole settlements ; and disgusting orgies were kept up night after night in every drinking den of the towns, and in every inn of the bush. It was a common thing for a man to drink away the whole of a season's wages in a single bout which might last for a week on end ; and many a poor fellow who had kept too close company with the bottle overnight found, but could not prove, that he had been robbed in the morning.

But the most abstemious of men need not grudge an excuse on behalf of the Australian of early days. The pot-house or the inn was often the only place of resort which was open

¹ The following dialogue, for instance, occurred in the Commonwealth Parliament on 27th May 1909. Senator Walker, ' Well, personally, I have subscribed to the *Dreadnought* fund. Did the honourable senator who interrupts me do that ? ' Senator Givens, ' No, I did not ; every one has not bled the public so much as the honourable senator has been able to bleed them. '—Official Report of Proceedings.

to him ; rum, raw, poisonous, and perhaps even drugged, the only drink. And after months of solitude in the bush, during which he had lived on nothing but tea, mutton, and damper, and seen few if any human faces, it need not be wondered at that the instinct of human fellowship was strong within him. He embarked on a wild carouse, treating and being treated by any chance boon companion of the road until the purses of both had run dry ; and then, when the delirium was over, he would return to his work. Physically he was probably little the worse, for the enforced abstinence of the out-station and the hard life in the open soon repaired the ravages of alcohol ; but the money which might have been put to better uses was wasted, and the labour of a year was thrown away in a fortnight.

Some improvement took place in time, as the hard livers of the old colonial school died out,¹ and were succeeded by a more temperate race of men ; but one need not condemn the excesses of the original pioneers too harshly. In an age when excessive drinking was common among all classes of Englishmen, they drank more than most ; but they were also tempted more than most men to flee from the continual monotony of their life to the illusory and transient pleasures of intoxication.

The dwellers in the bush may have been hard livers, and their language more emphatic than polite ; yet they had preserved many of the best characteristics of virile manhood. Their qualities and their defects, in fact, were both crude, strong, and unmistakable.

They were invariably hospitable to the stranger. They were almost always good sportsmen. And they had not lost their respect for woman—when woman deserved respect.

¹ See Lindsay Gordon's well-known verses :—

‘ Ah ! nearly all our comrades of the old colonial school,
Our ancient boon companions, Ned, are gone ;
Hard livers for the most part, somewhat reckless as a rule,
It seems that you and I are left alone.’

But unfortunately many of the women whom the settler met could advance small claim to the courtesy which belonged of right to their more virtuous sisters ; for although hundreds of female emigrants were sent out from England, a very large proportion were dragged from the brothels of London, while many others were corrupted on the voyage by bad companions or the sailors.¹ The streets of Sydney were still filled with the scum of the old world, and complaints were frequently made of the sexual vice which prevailed in the slums of the Australian metropolis.²

Yet although it was impossible to put an end to the unsavoury sights and scandals which had survived the convict era, a great change was gradually taking place, as a new race of Australian women now began to grow up which far excelled their not too reputable predecessors. It was difficult to believe, said one visitor to the antipodes, that the beautiful children whom he saw on all sides were the offspring of such parents ; but Nature and the climate³ were kinder to the budding nation than Britain had been. The sons and daughters of the convict and the prostitute were often at least outwardly respectable ; and year by year they were more

¹ In J. P. Johnson's *Plain Truths* is reported the case of a ship's boatswain who boasted that he had enjoyed the favours of a hundred different ladies on one voyage between England and Australia.

And in Sturt's *Life* is an account of the notorious female emigrants called the Green Linnets, which need not be reproduced in these modest pages.

² See, for example, *The City: its Sins, Sorrows, or the Dark Deeds of Sydney*, by the Rev. D. Allen (1873). He declared that iniquity was now rampant in the city, there were 'legions of seducers, harlots, and hotel dens, decoy-houses, virtue slaughter-houses, and ante-chambers for seduction. . . . If there is a hell this side the grave, this is it !' This discourse, with illustrative examples which I refrain from repeating, was delivered before the blushing members of the Young Men's Christian Association. I hope they did not verify its truth for themselves.

But after all, it amounts to little more than saying that Sydney was a seaport town. Every big European seaport can show the same sights to those who go out to look for them.

³ An idea prevailed at one time (see Lancelott's *Australia As It Is*, 1852) that the climate of the antipodes developed insanity. Subsequent experience has hardly borne this out.

and more enveloped by the steadily rising tide of those decent immigrants from England and their children whose influx was the real origin of the new Australian people.

But society in the bush still remained strangely mixed. The rough labouring man who had emigrated from England and was fortunate enough to obtain a sheeprun might discover that his nearest neighbour was the younger son of a peer, who had been educated at Eton or Harrow; the latter might be disconcerted to find that the next station was occupied by an emancipated and perhaps reformed convict, into the more intimate details of whose past life it would have been highly indelicate to inquire too closely.¹ But all now met on equal terms, for human companionship was so rare and precious in the solitudes of the interior that the artificial distinctions of an older civilisation were perforce abandoned.

In sharp contrast to the loneliness of life on a distant station in the bush was the brightness and vivacity of the great centres of population. There was already **City Life in Australia.** much gaiety and scope for amusement in the young city of Melbourne. A round of balls and dances filled the evenings of the wealthier inhabitants, and the business of pleasure might be varied by a visit to a concert, a theatre, or the opera-house. Collins Street, the chief thoroughfare of the Victorian capital, had become a fashionable promenade, and had even been compared to the London Regent Street for its shops. The cabbage-tree hat, the red flannel shirt, and the rough beard of the gold-seeker showed less conspicuously in the city as time wore on; wealth brought many social refinements, accompanied with frequent incongruities as the newly rich imitated, with some lack of success, the manners of a class to which they did not belong.

The newest modes from London and Paris could be bought

¹ A traveller in West Australia (Mrs. Dominic Daly) discovered a happily married and prosperous convict who had been transported for killing his first wife. The survival of the fittest?

in the better shops; the antipodean beau imitated the exquisite of Bond Street and Piccadilly; and a lady who visited the colony in 1861 found no difficulty in purchasing the most beautiful laces and dresses, not only in the capital, but even at the goldfields. The English have never been a nation of misers; and where money was plentiful and easily obtained, it was not less easily or pleasantly spent.

Public improvements soon accompanied private extravagance. In 1851 Melbourne had been condemned by the Chief Justice of Victoria as 'a capital that was neither lighted, paved, nor drained.' There were splendid private houses in Flinders Street, and excellent shops and restaurants in Collins Street; but both thoroughfares were flooded at times, and after dark were full of pitfalls to unaccustomed feet. Four years afterwards, however, the roads had been macadamised; illumination by gas was soon added; water was laid on to most of the houses, and private baths were becoming usual: a sewerage system was added later.

Sydney was not a whit behind its younger rival, whose precocity and success it affected to despise; but Brisbane was growing more slowly, and Adelaide was still a municipal skeleton, with many vacant plots of land to spoil the symmetry of its plan. Fremantle and Perth in West Australia were as yet little more than small provincial towns. They had made, indeed, some advance since 1840, in which year a traveller remarked that the appearance of both was most disheartening, no business being done, the one church—a miserable building of rushes—being used as a civil court as well as for divine service, and even Government House boasting nothing better than a canvas roof, which was not impervious to the rain. But neither Fremantle nor Perth was an object of pride to its citizens in the year 1860.

No other Australian cities, in fact, could compare with the splendid capitals of New South Wales and Victoria; and whatever claim the antipodes might make to learning or

culture must have been justified by an appeal to Sydney or Melbourne.

In those centres, however, the arts and sciences were by no means neglected, even at this early period of Australian history ; but sport in its various forms made a more general and engrossing appeal to the majority of the people. The greater part of the community lived in the open air ; and the love of open-air pursuits, which had been inherited from England, was intensified under the kindlier skies of the south.

Sport and
Open-Air
Life.

Cricket had taken firm root in Australia, and almost every male between five and fifty years of age played it regularly at every opportunity. The children did their best with imperfect weapons ; a tin can often served for a wicket, a stick for a bat, and a turnip for a ball ; but their elders imported the best stumps and leather from England. Matting wickets, however, were a poor but necessary substitute for the perfectly rolled turf of the mother country ; and the outfield was generally rough and uneven, except on the great metropolitan cricket-grounds, where neither trouble nor expense was spared to obtain a perfect pitch. But the enthusiasm of the players soon produced proficiency at the game, and when Australian teams visited England, and English teams visited Australia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there was little to choose between the champions of the two countries.¹

Hunting, shooting, and fishing wherever there was a river, added to the zest of country life ; while swimming, boxing,

¹ The first English cricket team visited Australia in 1862.

Several cricket records were made in Australia. The highest score in any first-class match in the world was 918—New South Wales *v.* South Australia, 1900 ; and the two highest individual innings—628 by A. E. J. Collins in 1899, and 566 by another batsman at Hobart in 1901. Both these huge scores were made by lads in school matches.

I notice with amusement that a meeting to discuss certain points concerning the game was held in Australia in 1909 under the high-sounding title of an Imperial Conference, and that in a cricket dispute in 1912 the Premier of New South Wales offered his mediation.

and rowing matches were often held in the towns. Football was less popular in Australia than in New Zealand, where it was played with a skill and spirit that proved too much for British teams when that colony sent a picked fifteen of its sporting heroes to the motherland in 1905.

But horse-racing appealed with unusual force to every section of a people that almost lived on horseback. Race-meetings were held in every centre of population, large or small; and squatters, farmers, stockmen and traders all gathered round the course whenever there was a reasonable promise of a good run and a close finish. Meetings of this kind ranked among the most important social functions of the year; and although the prizes were less valuable, the betting not so high, and the horses not such magnificent animals as at the classic English races, there was quite as much real sportsmanship in the small colonial scratch plate and up-country handicap as at Epsom or Newmarket.

Another sign of the love of the open air which characterised the English in Australia was the care which they bestowed upon their public and private gardens. The native flora of the antipodes, sombre and mournful in comparison with that of Europe, was enriched by the importation of every variety of English flowers and shrubs; and the sweet-scented mignonette, the stately dahlia, the tender fingers of the honeysuckle, the prodigal magnificence of the rose, and the modest loveliness of downcast fuchsias soon blossomed beside the sad eucalyptus and the aboriginal wattle scrub. The new plants took readily to an alien soil; ¹ magnificent Botanic Gardens were laid out in the leading cities, and few private

¹ Too readily sometimes, for they spread until they became a general pest. This was particularly the case with the hardy sweetbriar and thistle. But nothing in the vegetable world was so great a nuisance as the rabbit, whose numbers grew so rapidly in Australia that it became necessary for the Government to take drastic steps for their destruction. Rewards were offered for every rabbit destroyed; but a million and a half sterling had been spent by New South Wales alone before the evil was reduced to manageable proportions.

houses were so poor that they could not show some fragrant blooms around their walls.

But while the Australians were devoted to sport and their gardens, they by no means neglected the more serious if quieter pleasures of the student ; and it was remarked by every traveller that the people of all classes and different degrees were greatly addicted to reading.¹

A Wide-
spread Love
of Reading.

Literature, especially of the lighter kind, was almost as popular a mental diet as rum or tea for the physical body. Vast quantities of novels were consumed ; the works of more solid authors were sold by most of the booksellers ; and newspapers, whether produced in the colony or obtained from England, were universal.

Thanks to the progress of education, illiteracy was becoming as rare in Australia at the end of the nineteenth century as it had been usual at the beginning ; and most of the settlers filled up some of the monotonous hours in the bush in the delightful company of Scott, Dickens, or Thackeray. Many of the squatters possessed complete sets of their favourite authors, and often included science, biography, and history on their shelves as well as fiction. And there were good public libraries in most of the towns. Melbourne boasted a collection of over five thousand volumes, which was constantly being added to ; and both it and the rival establishment at Sydney were generally crowded with readers.

A good deal of literature, mainly of the periodical kind, was already produced in the Australian colonies. The first printing press had been set up at Sydney in the year 1800 by one George Howe, who had been employed as a young man in the office of the London *Times* ; the first newspaper, the *Sydney Gazette*, made its appearance on 5th March 1803. It was produced

Original
Australian
Literature.

¹ One traveller tells a story of a man who read the *Encyclopædia Britannica* through from beginning to end. The name of this truly heroic student has unhappily been lost.

under government supervision, and contained, in fact, little but government announcements, reports of criminal trials, and advertisements for some years.¹ The aspiring wings of such journalists as Australia may have contained in those early days were sadly restrained by official control; and the ingenious commentators on the events of the colony found that their compositions were revised not only by the editor of the periodical for which they wrote, but were sometimes transformed out of all recognition by the coldly critical eye and unappreciative pen of a Government censor. And the early editors of Australia were rendered timid by the fact that their organs were very largely dependent on official advertisements for their revenue, as well as on official permission for their appearance at all.

As the colony grew in size, however, the public appetite for news became greater than could be satisfied by a single sheet from a single press in Sydney. The periodicals of the antipodes advanced rapidly from the humble newspaper licensed and controlled by the Government into a number of powerful journals which came in time to exercise a considerable effect on public opinion. When the official control of the press was relaxed, the newspapers were generally outspoken, and often scurrilous; but after a while a greater sense of public responsibility on the part of the editors and proprietors raised the level of Australian journalism. It is a true saying that every country possesses the newspaper press which it deserves; and nothing gives a better idea of the advance of Australia than the contrast between the *Sydney Gazette* of 1803 and the able and well-conducted journals of Sydney and Melbourne a century later.

Monthly and quarterly reviews of some merit and ability

¹ The *Sydney Gazette* was a four-page weekly, and was published every Saturday. Its modest motto, on the front page of every issue, was: 'Thus we hope to prosper.' The contents of the early issues were largely reports of criminal cases and accounts of executions—an unconsciously ironical commentary on the motto of the paper.

were also added to the periodicals of New South Wales. They were conducted under considerable difficulties at first. In successive numbers of the *Australian Quarterly* in 1828, for instance, the editor apologised for the fact that 'typographical errors were unavoidable in this colony,' and complained that 'all the offices in Sydney would not be able to furnish a sufficiency of figures' for printing a daily meteorological table. But, despite these mechanical drawbacks, the review contained articles on such diverse subjects as the connection between religion and science, a paper on the beauty of order in the services of the Church, and some remarks on the improvement of sheep-farming.

The scope of the press broadened from year to year; and in 1856 the *Illustrated Journal of Australasia* may be found discussing such various topics as Chinese literature, the English poetry of the day, the representative institutions of the colonies, the geology of the colony of Victoria, and the ballads of Ireland—a sufficiently comprehensive list. The Australians of the second generation were thus able to provide much of their own periodical reading from the intellectual resources of the colony itself. But for more permanent literature they still depended mainly on England. An occasional novel of no remarkable merit issued from the press at Sydney; and the Australians were concerned that the quality of their local fiction was not so high as that of their wool, and seriously examined the reasons for their mediocrity in this respect.¹ The bulk of Australian literature, however, for several years more was mainly devoted to such practical matters as the breeding of sheep, the rearing of pure saddle horses, the manufacture of colonial wines and the care of a vineyard, and the interminable controversies over the land problem and the political disputes of the hour.

The first flights of the poetic muse on a virgin soil are generally timid and often ridiculous. Australia was no

¹ See *Illustrated Journal of Australasia*, 1856.

exception to the rule; and a quarto volume that was published at Sydney in 1819, entitled *First Fruits of Australasian Poetry*, contained nothing but common-place blank verse and puerile rhymes to justify its ambitious name.¹ Before the end of the century, however, the highest form of literature had become acclimatised in the antipodes. A large amount of readable verse that might, with the exercise of a charitable judgment, be almost mistaken for poetry, had been printed in the journals of the southern colonies; it was possible to publish an Australian anthology of quite respectable merit; and one or two writers deserved, although they hardly obtained, a wider reputation and a larger reading public than the antipodes could provide.

So long as poetry is imitative its value is small. The early Australian writers were afraid of originality either in thought or metre, and—in a land whose seasons, climate, and social atmosphere were the very converse of those of England—they imitated the greater English poets to the best of their ability. They sang the bitter sorrows of the exile; but it is the badness of the verse, not the poignancy of the sentiment, that affects the reader to tears.²

¹ I may quote one stanza that is neither better nor worse than its fellows:—

‘She (Nature) had made the squirrel fragile;
She had made the bounding hart;
But a third so strong and agile
Was beyond ev’n Nature’s art.
So she joined the former two
In thee, Kangaroo. . . .’

² Perhaps the best specimen of antipodean verse that imitates the great English models is the poem by Wentworth on Australia, which had considerable vogue for many years. I cite one stanza:—

‘O Britannia! Should’st thou cease to ride
Despotic Empress of old Ocean’s tide;—
Should thy tamed Lion—spent his former might,—
No longer roar, the terror of the fight;—
May this, thy last-born infant, then arise,
To glad thy heart, and greet thy parent eyes;
And Australasia float with flag unfurl’d
A new Britannia in another world?’

The sentiment is as irreproachable as the verse is smooth and uninspired.

The second half of the nineteenth century showed a very considerable advance. Adam Lindsay Gordon, an English emigrant to the antipodes, left the native Australian poets far behind in the swift spontaneous music of his ballads of the horse and bush. James Brunton Stephens, another British emigrant, wrote more polished verse that was often of very great beauty.¹ And though no native poet of the front rank appeared, a hundred minor writers contributed a single song, an occasional ballad, or a reverie that vignettes some aspect of Australian life with the stamp of simple truth.

The bulk of their collected work is as considerable as its merits are great. And its character showed an originality that had hitherto been lacking; an originality that separated it sharply from contemporary English and American verse, and gave it a position of its own in the literature of our language. The Canadian writers were full of the joy of achievement and the splendour of active life; but the heroism of a losing fight and the peace which follows man's inevitable last defeat were the inspiration of Australian poets, who dwelt on the hardships and sorrows of pioneering, on melancholy voices heard amid the solitudes of the bush, on work begun in hope and ended in death.

'They fought for you, Grey Selections,
The battle of long dry years,
Through seedtimes of sweat and sorrow
To harvests of hunger and tears;
You turned from the lips that wooed you,
And justice, awake on her throne,
For sake of those brave hearts broken,
Is watching you break your own!' ²

¹ The stanzas on 'Night' in *Convict Once* have always seemed to me particularly fine.

² *Abandoned Selections*, by W. H. Ogilvie.

Another sang of the travellers who yearned for endless rest :—

‘Dead kisses on the drooping lip
And a dead heart in the breast’;¹

a third told of those that ‘fighting fell who thought to tame the tameless, and won their barren crown,’ while

‘. . . in their sleep, like troubled children turning,
A dream of mother-country in them burning,
They whisper their despair,
And one vague, voiceless yearning
Burdens the pausing air. . . .’²

Seldom, indeed, is a brighter note struck, and the call of surging youth is rarely heard. The typical Australian song is of ‘where brown summer and death have mated’ :—

‘Out on the wastes of the Never Never—
That’s where the dead men lie!
There where the heat waves dance for ever—
That’s where the dead men lie!
That’s where the earth’s loved sons are keeping
Endless tryst: not the west wind sweeping
Feverish pinions can wake their sleeping—
Out where the dead men lie!

Where brown summer and death have mated—
That’s where the dead men lie!
Loving with fiery lust unsated—
That’s where the dead men lie!
Out where the grinning skulls bleach whiteley
Under the saltbush sparkling brightly;
Out where the wild dogs chorus nightly—
That’s where the dead men lie!’³

A weird sense of desolation runs through nearly all the Australian poetry of this period. Men set forth on journeys from which they never return; women wait long lonely years in the bush for success which never comes :—

¹ *The Camp within the West*, by Roderic Quinn.

² *The Dwellings of our Dead*, by Arthur H. Adams.

³ *Where the Dead Men lie*, by Barcroft Henry Boake.

'The red sun robs their beauty, and, in weariness and pain,
 The slow years steal the nameless grace that never comes
 again ;
 And there are hours men cannot soothe, and words men cannot say—
 The nearest woman's face may be a hundred miles away.'¹

The monotony of the unvarying season meanwhile sinks deeply into the soul :—

'Unchanging here the drab year onwards presses :
 No spring comes trysting here with new-loosed tresses,
 And never may the years
 Win autumn's sweet caresses—
 Her leaves that fall like tears.'²

The persistent note of failure and death sounds incongruous in the poetry of a young nation, which usually prefers to dwell on its successful progress rather than on more melancholy scenes ; although there are failures enough and to spare even among the successes of youth, just as there is many a wave on the incoming tide which fails to touch the beach. But Australian literature gained not a little in depth from its absorption in the sombre aspects of existence ; and if it is advanced as an objection against the Australian poetry of this period that it sometimes exaggerated the gloom and solitude of station life, it must be remembered that there was a very large amount of truth in its pictures of stoic endurance and quiet fortitude, borne too often without reward.

Far less individual and striking in character was antipodean prose. No great prose author appeared in nineteenth-century Australia ; but there were many who wrote correctly and well, and whose work gained them some fame in the old as well as the new world. Among these may be mentioned Rolf Boldrewood and E. W. Hornung as novelists, and Rusden as a historian.

¹ *The Women of the West*, by George Essex Evans.

² *The Dwellings of our Dead*, by Arthur H. Adams.

In the year 1860, however, the native literature of Australia was still of poor quality, and art did not yet exist. It is true that the establishment of Fine Arts Institutes at Melbourne and elsewhere at this time indicates the presence of an active interest in painting and sculpture; while the creditable designs of many of the public buildings erected in the state capitals proves that the Australians were alive to the value of dignity and beauty in their civic life. But in neither case had any original talent asserted itself. The churches, offices, and houses of the antipodes were mainly copied from those of England; and it was justly said that the pictures which 'sold most readily were the refuse of the French market.'

But in the next generation very many young Australians came over to Europe to study art in the studios of Paris; and although no great master of painting or sculpture was born in the English antipodes in the nineteenth century, a large amount of sound and capable work was produced.

And already a noticeable taste for music was spreading over the land. No great Australian singer had as yet charmed the whole world, as did Melba forty years later with the sweetness and depth of her incomparable voice; but Philharmonic Societies had been founded; the piano was seen in many homes, and a visitor noticed with some surprise, as early as the year 1852, that the best classical music was often heard at remote stations in the bush. If no original dramatist of any merit had yet appeared, the theatre in Sydney was declared, probably with some exaggeration, to be as good as that in any English town except in London; the opera was performed and appreciated at Melbourne; and even on the gold-fields the strains of the humble accordion were frequently heard when labour was over for the day, while less often the violin and the flute were played in their idle moments by more accomplished seekers after nuggets.

Their interest in art and literature was enough to defend

the Australians from the charge that they were absorbed in the material affairs of life to the exclusion of more spiritual matters. And the practical attention which they gave to education ensured that future generations would be as well equipped mentally as they almost invariably were physically.

One of the chief drawbacks to family life in the bush had been the lack of educational facilities. Children might grow up healthy, active, and with a love of the open Australian
air; but they were also apt to grow up ignorant. Education.
Some parents had little time, while others had little inclination, or possibly even little capacity, for the training of their offspring; and the teacher, like the doctor, was probably many miles away. The richer settlers could indeed place their children at one or other of the good boarding schools which were established in Sydney or Melbourne, and the wealthiest of the squatters occasionally sent their sons to England to complete their education. But the majority, who could never hope to afford so great an outlay, were forced to depend on the local state schools, whose operations were gradually extended by the governments of the various colonies into the sparsely populated interior.

It is very greatly to the credit of Australia that her people attached considerably more importance to education in the nineteenth century than was done in England during the same period. In the old convict days the schools of New South Wales had indeed been few in number and apparently poor in quality. But with the increase of free settlers the desire for knowledge spread; and in the year 1860 the mother colony already counted 798 schools within its borders, with 34,767 pupils in attendance. These were gradually increased year by year, until in 1895 they numbered 3463, with over a quarter of a million daily scholars. The education of children between the ages of six and fourteen was made compulsory by the Public Instruction Act of 1880, the parents being required to pay a small weekly fee of threepence for

each child educated, and receiving a free pass by railway for their children to the nearest school.

Much the same system was followed after a time by each of the other colonies, Queensland lagging somewhat behind, while West Australia was so liberal that whenever the authorities were notified that sixteen children were present within a radius of three miles, they were at once prepared to establish a school in that locality.

The Australians were fortunate in freeing themselves after a time from the religious disputes which hampered the educational field in the motherland. In the old colonial days the schools of New South Wales were, it is true, largely under the direction of various sects; and from 1848 to 1866 there were two rival authorities in existence, the one denominational, the other undenominational. But in 1866 this double control was modified, and fourteen years later it was swept away entirely, the Government schools of the colony being declared entirely unsectarian. Henceforth Australia was spared those wearisome and unending controversies which did so much to delay the advance of knowledge in England.

Nor was there visible in Australia that distrust of popular education which still remained an obstinate prejudice or superstition in England. Practically every child born in the antipodes was drawn within the net of elementary instruction; illiteracy declined year by year. In 1857 one person in every four who was married in New South Wales was unable to sign the marriage register otherwise than by mark; in 1906 only two in every hundred failed to write their names when required.

Higher education was likewise attended to; and after 1850, when the University of Sydney was established, the ambitious scholar in the antipodes could take his degree in several faculties without leaving the shores of Australia.¹ But the political rivalry between one

The Uni-
versities.

¹ Barff, *Short Historical Account of the University of Sydney*.

settlement and another was soon extended to the educational field. What New South Wales found necessary Victoria could not do without; and that ambitious colony, which in the year 1852 already possessed 115 elementary schools, saw with satisfaction the foundation stone of Melbourne University laid on 3rd July 1854. South Australia followed suit with Adelaide University; and nearly half a century later, the colony of Queensland celebrated its jubilee in 1909 by deciding to found a similar institution in Brisbane.

But the competition in education was open to fewer objections, and it brought with it greater advantages, than the political rivalry between the states. It encouraged individuality at the cost of economy; it can hardly be said to have lowered the dignity of the professors, since the emoluments were generally large enough to attract capable men. The absence of one central university may have retarded but did not prevent the growth of national unity; it also stopped the inevitable tendency for learning and literature to become associated with any one place.

Although education was divorced from religious instruction in the ordinary elementary curriculum of Australia, it does not appear that religion suffered through not being taught in the colonial schools.¹ The religious Religion in
Australia. opinions of the English people at the antipodes, in fact, followed generally those of the English people at home rather closely, both in quality and degree. Those who were members of the Church of England in the old country found the priests of the Anglican communion awaiting them in the antipodes; for the Anglican Church had not neglected what was at once its opportunity and its duty in the southern continent as it had in Canada and the West Indies,² and the

¹ This a highly controversial question, and a good deal of rather ruddy ink has been spilt by disputants on either side. I can only plead that I have done my best to form an impartial judgment, and await the inevitable kicks from those who dissent.

² See vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iii., and vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. ii.

work that had been begun by the first chaplain in convict days laid the foundations of a structure that had grown steadily among the free settlers. Those who were Non-conformists in England usually found a pastor of their own denomination or of some similar sect holding almost identical religious views in Australia, with whom they could worship in comfort and spiritual peace. The Irish immigrants remained true to the historic Catholic creed which had been their stay through generations of misfortune; the harder Scots held fast to the sober Presbyterian teaching of their country.¹

The British settlers in the antipodes had no desire to found any new school in religion. None of those peculiar and often absurd developments of Christianity, or frank experiments in religious faith and practice, of which American soil has been so fertile, took root in Australia. Neither heresy nor schism troubled the faithful with controversy; indeed, so consistent were the people in imitating the example of Britain that complaint was made even by the orthodox that the spirit of Australian religion was altogether unoriginal.² The churches were built on the same plans as those of England, their ritual and the very hours of divine service were the same as at home; and while the attendance was usually good, there is no hint that the ordinary preacher either thought it necessary or found it possible to produce a sermon superior in quality to those pulpit platitudes which made drowsy congregations nod approving heads in the British Isles.

But if the English in the antipodes lacked originality in their religion, their belief was not necessarily lacking in vitality or virility. Nor were they ignorant of the value

¹ The religious denominations are stated (Lancelott, *Australia as it is*, 1852) to have numbered at that time, Anglicans, 93,137; Roman Catholics, 56,899; Presbyterians, 18,156; Wesleyans, 10,008; Jews, 979.

² *Contemporary Review*, 1889.

of Christianity as a rule of life or slow to appreciate its ministers. It was noticed by an observant lady who travelled through Australia that, although brutality and coarseness were sometimes seen on the goldfields and elsewhere, and women occasionally bore the marks of their husbands' fists, the clergy were generally treated with respect, even if their teaching was too often neglected by an impatient world.¹ And their influence, if it could not compare with the spiritual tyranny of the old divines of New England, was nevertheless considerable in its cumulative effect, and few could deny that it was exercised for good.²

CHAPTER III

THE UNITED COMMONWEALTH: 1880-1901³

IN the hundred odd years that went to the making of the new English nation in Australia three main periods of growth

¹ *Social Life and Manners*, 1861. I confess that the lack of originality in Australian religion makes me marvel. One would have thought that some new message to mankind would have come from the prolonged meditation that was enforced on every dweller in the bush. Surely not every squatter confined all his thoughts to sheep-scab?

² A young Australian journalist named Frank Fox once told me that there was no religion in the antipodes. There could be no belief in God, he asserted, in a country where irrigation was necessary. I imagine he thought he had perpetrated an epigram. Unfortunately for his theory, Holland is at once one of the most religious and best irrigated countries in Europe, while the fundamental law of the Australian Commonwealth states that the people 'humbly rely on the blessing of Almighty God.' These words were included in obedience to a widespread popular demand, and I presume they were not meant to be meaningless.

³ A useful little volume of official *Papers relating to a Federal Union of the Australian Colonies* is dated 1862. For some years subsequently there is little federation literature in Australia; but from about 1870 to 1900 and even later a large mass of pamphlets, speeches, magazine articles, and discussions on the subject issued from the press. The more important of these are indicated in footnotes in the following pages.

The standard legal authority for the whole subject is Quick and

and change may be discerned, whose leading tendencies and characteristics were in most respects sharply distinguished, and clearly divided from each other. And the distinction between each of the three periods was not merely that superficial change which is inevitable when one generation gives place to its successor; it was a complete change in government, in policy, in the popular outlook, and in the whole trend of that political sentiment which helps to shape the destinies of a nascent nation.

I. The first period saw the inauguration of the system of convict transportation in 1788, and reached its height under Governor Macquarie some twenty-five years later, at which time the immigration of free men was discouraged, and Australia was regarded as a colony reserved for the reformed, or at least emancipated, prisoners who had been expelled from the shores of Britain.

II. The second period opens with the arrival in large numbers of free immigrants in the two decades between 1832 and 1852. Their influence, as might have been but was not, in fact, foreseen, was strongly although not invariably exercised against the continuance of transportation; and the total cessation of the convict system, in deference to their urgent demands, was henceforth only a question of time.

But when the stain of crime was once abolished in 1840—for the fact that transportation was continued to the struggling colony of West Australia until 1868 hardly affected the, as yet, far more important eastern provinces of the continent—the English in Australia made rapid progress. The old criminal population rapidly gave way before the steadily

Garran's *Annotated Constitution*, an exhaustive and able work; to this may be added Moore's *Commonwealth of Australia* and Clark's *Constitutional Law*. Other useful works include Teece, *Comparison between the Federal Constitutions of Canada and Australia*; Barton, *Historical Sketch of Australian Federation*; Garran, *The Coming Commonwealth*; Willoughby, *Australian Federation: Aims and Possibilities*; Cockburn, *Australian Federation*; and Craig, *The Federal Defence of Australia*.

flowing tide of free immigration; the sombre dawn of southern colonisation was followed by the bright sun of liberty. In this second period of its history the antipodes obtained those free institutions which no British community will remain without for long; and although West Australia still lagged behind—for responsible government was not granted to that state until 1890—the bulk of the Australian people, who had settled in New South Wales and Victoria, were in control of their own government and administration throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.¹

They had already begun to progress on individual and provincial, not on united and national lines. Victoria and Queensland had separated from New South Wales; West and South Australia had few interests in common, and Tasmania was likewise isolated from the rest. The attention of young communities is naturally concentrated very largely on their own internal and immediate affairs, often to the entire seclusion of more distant matters; and in any case the area of the virgin continent was far too large for any collective interest to exist spontaneously between provinces that were divided from each other by hundreds, and in some cases by thousands, of miles.

During this second period one may indeed observe an occasional sign of the formation of a united national sentiment in the swift current of Australian provincial life, as one may see an occasional bubble float to the surface on a swift-

¹ Responsible government of a type similar to that recommended by Lord Durham in Canada (vol. iii. bk. xi. chs. iv. and v.) was introduced in Australia in 1856. It had been preceded in New South Wales by a Legislative Council, which, established in 1843, consisted of thirty-six members, of whom twelve were nominated by the Crown, and the remainder elected by vote, a property qualification being required. Previous to this a Legislative Council of seven members, nominated by the governor of the colony, had been introduced in 1823. This council was enlarged to fifteen in 1828.

Some of the early ministries were very unstable. South Australia had forty cabinets in thirty-seven years; New Zealand once had three cabinets in three weeks.

running stream ; but the main trend of public opinion in each colony was strongly in favour of the separation of one province from another. Each developed on its own lines ; each watched jealously the development of its neighbour ; all alike repudiated the idea of sacrificing their individual importance to the formation of the greater common unit. There was, in fact, no popular driving force behind the occasional proposals for union. There seemed little to unite for, and nothing to unite against.

III. But the third period, whose beginning may be dated very roughly from about the year 1880, saw a reversal in many respects of the dominant political ideas of the second. Individualism now gave way to collectivism ; provincialism to nationalism ; division to unity ; and after twenty-one years of vigorous controversy federation triumphed over isolation, and the Australian nation was born. The same process, in fact, which had changed Anglo-Saxon England from a heptarchy of warring states into a United Kingdom ; which had transformed the independent colonies of America into a united republic ; which had joined the provinces of Canada into a single Dominion, was now to take place in Australia, and to change the individual English colonies of the antipodes into a united nation.

Even during the years when the provinces prided themselves most on their provinciality and their isolation from their neighbours, when Victoria was enforcing a tariff against the exports of New South Wales, and when both New South Wales and Queensland were building their railways on different gauges, there were some who looked for a union of the various colonies in one common political organisation. It is true that none of these attempts were fruitful ; but at least they prevented the idea of national union from sinking altogether into the background, as it had done among the American colonies in the early eighteenth century.

Failure of
Early
Plans of
Union,
1849-57.

In 1849, for instance, a committee of the English Privy Council recommended the selection of the Governor of one of the Australian colonies as Governor-General, with the power of convening a General Assembly of Australia. A Bill to that effect was introduced in the following year in the Imperial Parliament, but abandoned; and although in 1851 Governor Fitzroy was appointed Governor-General, the title was only nominal.¹

Two years subsequently a move was made in the same direction in Australia; committees in New South Wales and Victoria both referred to the subject, and Wentworth, the first native statesman of Australia, announced himself strongly in favour of union; but nothing came of the idea.²

Although Wentworth was discouraged, he was not disheartened by his failure; and when living in England in 1857 he addressed a memorial to the British Government on the subject. But again he was unsuccessful; and unequivocal signs soon made it evident that Australia was by no means ripe for union yet.

An intercolonial conference to discuss the whole question of union or federation was suggested by the province of Victoria in November 1857. South Australia and Tasmania both agreed to take part in the debates, and delegates were appointed to represent the three colonies;³ but New South Wales refused to entertain the project, and it was therefore again necessarily abandoned.

¹ This project of union was denounced in Australia with that full-blooded invective which generally serves to conceal poverty of argument. Robert Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke) appealed to the people to 'put it from them as a thing accursed, to have no part whatever in working it. Let them leave the wretched offspring of tyranny and indolence still-born—dead. Let the Government, when it found the colonists would not pollute their souls by putting any of its foul provisions into operation, take their scheme back amidst the shouts of ridicule which shall reverberate throughout the Empire.' Gas; but gas that was readily swallowed, and speedily produced a species of political intoxication.

² For Wentworth's career see ch. i. of this book.

³ See speech of Premier of Tasmania, 9th July 1884.

Without the co-operation of the mother colony it would have been ludicrous to discuss any plans of union; but for many years more New South Wales remained steadfastly opposed to the idea. And in 1859, when a further political division was made by the separation of Queensland from New South Wales, it was clear that for the present the tide was running strongly in the opposite direction.

The next two decades were the dead years of Australian unionism, during which time the cause that Wentworth had advocated seemed to make little if any progress. It is true that there were no additional subdivisions of the five continental states into smaller units. But such additional subdivisions were advocated; and notably in the case of Queensland and South Australia the arguments in favour of separating the tropic north from the temperate south were weighty.¹ It is also true that there were still some who never abandoned faith in Australian unionism during those years when their political creed was suspect of the multitude. But their influence was generally small; and although they could point to certain indications that unionism was still alive, their opponents could retort with emphasis and equal truth that the same indications proved that it was very nearly dead.

In 1860, for example, a select committee of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales was appointed to consider the problem of federation. The committee sat and deliberated, but no report was ever produced. Ten years later a proposal in favour of a general conference on the subject, which was made by the province of Victoria, failed to gain any more support than the previous proposal from the same quarter in 1857; but in 1873 it was possible to hold an intercolonial conference, which, however, was confined to postal matters, at Sydney.

¹ See bk. xx. ch. ii.

During the next few years the tide began to turn, but to turn very slowly ; and though the advocates of the individual states were still largely in the majority, the unionist cause in time began steadily to gain ground. Already in 1877 the poet Brunton Stephens foretold that the natal day of the new nation, whose ' bounds should be the girdling seas alone,' was near ;¹ and in 1880 the first Federal Conference met at Sydney.

**The Tide
Turns,
1873-91.**

When poets and politicians agree, there is usually some truth in their predictions ; but the prophecies in this case needed time for their fulfilment. For twenty years more the question of the political future of Australia remained unanswered ; yet during that time the careful observer might have seen that, while the old divisions of provincial state from state continued, there were certain impulses, both external and internal, which now combined to urge Australia towards political union.

The chief external impulse which influenced the divided colonies of Australia in the direction of political union was the fear of foreign aggression. If union is strength, division must be weakness ; and the colonies, admitting their divisions, were unable to deny their weakness.

**External
Influences
Tending to
Political
Union.**

It is true that Australia was protected by the mighty force of the British Empire and the British Navy. It is also true that she was isolated from the rest of the world. She was not unconscious of her isolation, which impressed itself on her with the arrival of every mail from Europe ; nor was she ashamed of her lonely throne in the southern seas. And

¹ See *The Dominion of Australia*, by Stephens. The whole poem is worth reading. Another Australian poet, to whom I apologise for having mislaid his name, wrote as follows :—' From all division let our land be free, for God has made her one.' The sentiment is excellent, but the author forgot that the contrary example of Spain and Portugal might have been urged by factious opponents.

she was not ungrateful for the protection of the empire and the navy.¹

But her isolation had not protected her shores from invasion in the past, even in the old days of slow sailing ships; the Dutch and Spaniards had reached Australia as well as the British, and if French ambitions to found an antipodean New France had come to naught, Gallic names upon the maps of British Australia were a constant reminder of projects that had certainly been abandoned, but might again be revived. And the isolation of Australia from the rest of the world had shrunk steadily since the steamship had superseded the sailing vessel. The island continent was no longer eight months or even eight weeks from Europe; and there was no certainty that her isolation would not continue to shrink as the means of communication became quicker.²

Many parts of the old world of Europe and Asia were overpopulated. Australia, on the other hand, was nowhere very thickly populated, and large tracts of her territory were altogether bare of human beings. Many of those tracts were not desert; on the contrary, they were fertile and luxurious wildernesses of nature, which were certain to appeal strongly to men suffering from land-hunger.³

Against a large invasion of such men, stiffened by some military force and discipline, the two or three million scattered English people in Australia would have been helpless. The latter would not indeed have been driven from their own settlements, but they could not have driven the invader from the land he had seized. And with that invasion the

¹ This was admitted even by the *Sydney Bulletin*, a strongly anti-imperial newspaper. See, for example, the issue dated 30th March 1911:—‘Never in the world’s history has a self-respecting nation been defended so cheaply as Australia was under the old régime.’

² See, for example, a tract entitled *Sixteen Days to Australia*. At that time the voyage from England took five or six weeks.

³ See Alfred Searcy’s *In Australian Tropics*, where some remarkable details of the fertility and beauty of north and north-western Australia are given.

last chance of political, social, or racial unity in Australia would have vanished for ever.

It might have been urged in answer to this that the waste spaces of Australia were British territory, and that they were therefore protected by the overpowering strength of the British Navy. That was indeed true. But the British Navy was not always in evidence in Australian waters, and what is not always in evidence is sometimes overlooked. And even though the Navy was trusted, the Imperial Government, which controlled the Navy, was not always trusted. That Government had not invariably been tactful or sympathetic in its dealings with the people of Australia. Prominent politicians, too, in England had been heard to speak in favour of abandoning the colonies;¹ and they had not been repudiated by the Imperial Government. Those anti-imperial speeches in England were not forgotten when men came to consider the question of imperial defence in Australia.

It is hardly credible that any British Government, however much it may have inwardly sympathised with the anti-imperial views of Cobden and the English Free Trade school, would actually have abandoned an imperial territory, whether in Australia or elsewhere, at the bidding of a foreign power. But the new generation of Englishmen in the antipodes, young, ambitious, and enterprising as it had shown itself, and vaguely conscious of national aspirations which it could hardly as yet express, now began to insist, not only upon the retention of the whole of Australia as British territory, but upon the necessity of the expansion of British influence as the sovereign authority over the isles of the Pacific. And to that expansion the Imperial Government would by no means consent.

The question came to a crisis when the colony of Queensland annexed the great island of Papua in the year 1883, and

¹ See vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.

the Imperial Government refused to ratify the act of the colony.¹ The essential underlying fact, of which both the Imperial Government and the Australians were well aware, was that Germany, now busily engaged in founding a colonial empire, wished to obtain a footing on that island; while Queensland, from whose northernmost territory Papua was only divided by a narrow strait of water, had not unnaturally begun to regard that country as one destined for her own. But the Australian colony understood little of European politics, and the Imperial Government of the day cared little for Australian interests; ² the annexation of Papua, which the Gladstone Cabinet had itself determined on before it was definitely informed of Germany's intentions,³ was disallowed, and a large part of the island was proclaimed German territory. The announcement caused intense irritation in Queensland, and indeed throughout Australia; and the obvious comment was made that if the five colonies of Australia had been united, the Imperial Government would have paid more attention to their wishes, even at the expense, perhaps, of some further straining of the already strained relations with Germany. In that sense, therefore, the refusal of the Imperial Government to allow Australian expansion was one of the chief external impulses towards Australian union.

The loss of the greater part of Papua—for part of the island was ultimately annexed by Britain—brought with it the remembrance of another episode that pointed the same moral. The island of New Caledonia, which had been dis-

¹ See bk. xx. ch. i.

² A letter from Gladstone to Granville, in which he speaks of the duty of dealing tenderly with the 'prejudices' of our colonies (*Life of Lord Granville*, 1885) sufficiently proves this, apart altogether from the fact that the Imperial Government overrode the wishes of Australia. It must be remembered, however, that the Imperial Government had a much more urgent and difficult question on hand in Egypt (vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. iii.) of which Germany took full advantage to embarrass the feeble hands of Gladstone and Granville. See also vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii. or the general policy of the Cabinet.

Life of Lord Granville, vol. ii. p. 371.

covered and named a century before by Captain Cook, had been annexed by France, and used as a penal station for convicts ; and that, in spite of the protests of Australians who, having at last purified their own house, objected to this scandal at their doors. Here too remonstrances which were ineffectual when coming from divided colonies might have had more weight if they had been uttered by a united Commonwealth.

A domestic quarrel with the Imperial Government in 1888 over the question of excluding Chinese immigrants ¹ likewise emphasised the disadvantages of disunion ; and in the following year a report by General Bevan Edwards, pointing out the utter inadequacy of Australian military defences in case of invasion, startled the colonies almost into a panic. Again the moral was drawn out that the only possible means of successfully resisting invasion from without was by union within the country.²

These were the chief external influences making for Australian union. A minor influence of the same origin and leading in a similar direction was afforded by the study of the past history and contemporary politics of Europe and America. There are some indications in the ephemeral literature of the time ³ that the example of federal unity in the United States, in Canada, and in Germany was not lost upon the more serious school of Australian statesmanship ; but such studies were too remote from the ordinary

¹ See bk. xx. ch. iii. and bk. xxii.

² There had previously been a rather absurd scare of an invasion by Russia, of all countries in the world, in 1877 ; and Australia was already seriously perturbed at the possibility of an Asiatic invasion.

³ There are several volumes of bound tracts, pamphlets, and magazine articles dealing with Australian politics and industry in the Royal Colonial Institute. In one such volume, among discussions as to the future of Australian vineyards, the prevalence of sheep-scab, and the improvement of cattle-breeding, I came across an incongruous but comely intruder in the shape of an animated discussion as to the number of petticoats worn, or rather displayed, by Letty Lind, a popular dancer of the day ; together with a testimony by a clergyman as to the propriety of the performance (without illustrations).

provincial political life of the antipodes to have much weight with the rank and file.

These external influences towards Australian union were reinforced by certain internal influences tending to the same end. The practical traveller noticed and condemned the absurdity of each Australian state building its railways on a different gauge, with the inevitable consequences of inconvenience to passengers every time they crossed the inter-colonial frontiers, of high charges for freight carried from one colony to another, of continual delays and endless expense.¹ The divided and none too friendly nations of Europe had, with the exception of Russia, agreed upon a standard gauge for their railways, to the common benefit of all concerned; but what men of different languages, manners, and customs had done in the old world, men of the same language, manners, and customs had not done in the new. Had Australia been a united commonwealth before the construction of her railway system, she would certainly have built her lines of communication on a uniform gauge; as it was, provincial jealousies overrode the general advantage.²

The same traveller, who grumbled at the inconvenience of changing his train on a journey from Sydney to Melbourne, may well have cursed the additional infliction of a custom-house on the inter-colonial frontiers. For the divided Australian colonies had raised high fiscal barriers against each

¹ The gauge in New South Wales was the standard British gauge, 4 ft. 8½ in. In Victoria it was 5 ft. 3 in.; the same in part of South Australia, but the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge was also in use in that state, as in West Australia and Queensland. The smaller the gauge, the cheaper the cost of construction—an argument not without force in a new country; but the ultimate cost of breaking bulk every time merchandise crossed a colonial frontier more than outbalanced the original economy in the end.

² Federation in this respect came too late. The cost of altering thousands of miles of permanent way, the rolling stock, and the station accommodation would have been too heavy for the not illimitable finances of the Commonwealth to bear.

other ; Victoria, which introduced a protective tariff in 1866, excluded the products of New South Wales, and South Australia excluded the products of Victoria. New South Wales remained true to her original free trade policy, imposing a tariff for revenue only ; but the neighbouring colonies became staunchly and permanently protectionist.¹

An interminable and embittered controversy raged around the subject, and vast quantities of ink and paper were consumed in the attempt to convince opponents of their fiscal errors.² But the combatants were obstinate, and were neither convinced nor convincing ; debates and public conferences were held from time to time,³ but in vain.

The root of the difficulty in this case, over which every disputant stumbled and frequently fell headlong, measuring his length across a stony expanse of comparative statistics, lay in the undeniable fact that each colony had prospered, whatever fiscal system it had adopted. It was impossible either to prove or to deny that any or all of the colonies might have done either better or worse under a different system.

On the mere lines of commercial advantage the vexed problem could never have been settled. But the whole subject was lifted to a higher plane by Sir Henry Parkes, when discussing the sensational statements of General Bevan Edwards regarding the defencelessness of Australia from invasion. 'The question of free trade or protection,' said the veteran

¹ Governor Fitzroy, who was appointed Governor-General of Australia in 1851, during the premature and abortive attempt to unify Australia, predicted the tariff wars between the colonies and the consequent increase of friction, jealousy and ill-will.

Precisely the same thing occurred in the early United States. See vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv. And in Canada, bk. xi. ch. v.

² I have looked through much of the literature on this question, and I cannot advise anybody else to follow my example. If the tireless student wishes for a sample rather above the usual controversial average, let him consult Sir George Reid's *Five Free Trade Essays*.

³ As an example, see report of Australasian Commercial Conference, 1890, held at Dunedin.

politician of New South Wales, 'is trifling, compared with the necessity of giving to Australia an Australian Government.'¹

Parkes had touched, and not without intention, on a chord that was destined to vibrate with increasing strength through the antipodes. For many years that astute and far-seeing man had advocated with leisurely determination the federal cause; and it is to his lasting credit as a statesman that he perceived clearly the impossibility of reaching a settlement that rested solely on a commercial and fiscal basis. Tariffs might differ, commercial interests might vary, in every province; but the interests of the people of Australia as a whole were greater than the divergent commercial interests of all its divided provinces.

Common trade interests may lead, and often have led, to the formation of a powerful trade league or commercial union; but when those common interests diverge, the league which is based on them alone will also dissolve.² A nation, on the other hand, is founded on the stronger basis of emotion, tradition, and sentiment, the consciousness of a common purpose, the possession of a common tongue; and its nationhood will survive the shocks of divergent commercial interests within its borders which would have been sufficient to split a commercial league into irreconcilable enmity.³

Australia had no common commercial interests, but her people were beginning to have a common national consciousness founded on the possession of a common ancestry, a common tongue, and a common destiny—the peaceful con-

¹ See Parkes's *Speeches on the Federal Government of Australia*; published 1890.

² I need only refer to the mediæval history of the Italian trading republics.

³ The conflict of agricultural and manufacturing interests in modern Europe and America, which has been weathered by states founded on the principle of nationality, would probably have split a commercial league or trading union.

quest and colonisation of a virgin continent. And it was indeed no small factor in the spread of the nascent sentiment of nationality in the antipodes that practically the whole white population of Australia had sprung from a single nation in the northern hemisphere.¹ Here, therefore, was no fundamental clash of ideals, aims, or methods; the differences between province and province in Australia were those of brothers who have lived long apart, but who have retained the old family likeness in spite of separation. In the happy words of a famous phrase coined by Sir Henry Parkes, 'The crimson thread of kinship runs through us all.'

Some, at least, of the abler spirits among the generation that reached maturity as the nineteenth century ebbed began to claim a more ample horizon, and to think in national instead of provincial dimensions; there were debates and disputes as to the qualities necessary to a nation and the existence of a national spirit; a Young Australia party made itself somewhat noisily evident, and after the manner of youth it showed less respect for its fathers than its seniors thought they deserved. The cry of 'Australia for the Australians' was raised,² and not without some support and effect in limiting the influx of immigrants from England.³ Birth in Australia was now elevated into a virtue or a merit,⁴ and some of the older settlers, who knew far more of the real difficulties of life in an undeveloped country than their sons, even complained that young Australia spoke of its parents with contempt as foreigners.⁵

These were the perhaps inevitable absurdities of an infant nationality, which time and experience reduced to their proper

¹ The all-British character of Australia is discussed statistically in the previous chapter.

² By a writer in the *Melbourne Review*, 1880, and others.

³ See bk. xx. ch. iii., and bk. xxii.

⁴ In direct contrast to the previous generation, which denominated those of English birth as 'standard' coin, and of colonial birth as mere 'currency.' In each case the phrase was an indirect method of self-praise.

⁵ *Melbourne Review*.

perspective ; ¹ but in spite of such occasional follies, Australian nationalism was built on solid ground.

And whatever form it may have taken in its infancy, Australian nationalism was necessarily in favour of Australian union, since nationalism depends on union. The problem, therefore, which seemed insoluble when regarded from the lowlands of commerce, where only points of difference were visible, was found more practicable when regarded from the highlands of national sentiment, where only points of agreement were seen.

These various impulses, external and internal, combined to lead Australia towards political union. But there were other impulses which tended to perpetuate political separation; these impulses, however, were altogether of internal origin. And while the external influences which urged the colonies towards union were strong, and were counteracted by no external influence in favour of continued separation, the internal influences in favour of union were weak, and were more than neutralised, at least for some time, by the internal influences opposed to union.

The chief and most deadly internal enemy of Australian union was not active opposition but passive indifference. Arguments can be met by arguments, taunts by taunts, the cheap sneer beloved of cheap politicians by the cheap sneer or the dignified retort in return ; but indifference cannot be fought by indifference. And one after another

¹ Even greater absurdities were committed at times on behalf of the contemporary infant nationalist movements in Europe. Some of the Slavonic peoples on the Lower Danube made their language a test of nationality ; but unfortunately those who spoke the various dialects were not mutually comprehensible. At a general congress held to demonstrate Slavonic principles I believe the delegates had to hold the discussions in German, as the only language that everybody understood.

And I remember that once in the streets of Prague, the very centre of Czech nationalism, I was foolish enough to ask my way in German. My informant proved the vigour of his patriotism and the strength of his anti-Teuton convictions by a copious expectoration at my feet before he replied. I thanked him with due humility in French and passed on.

the advocates of political union complained that audiences received that subject in stony silence. Sir Henry Parkes, the oldest of Australian politicians, whose refer-
 ence to local controversies and fiscal disputes never failed to evoke applause and discussion, found little response to his set speeches on federation.

Internal
 Influences
 Opposed to
 Political
 Union.

And a younger and more cultured orator, whose eloquence has moved the proverbially cold people of England to the same enthusiasm with which his own antipodes have greeted his warm and telling phrases, had the same chilling experience; Alfred Deakin, who embraced the cause of Australian union with ardour, likewise admitted that on this subject, and this subject alone, he encountered 'a deadweight of apathy' which seemed irresistible.

When such was the fate of the leading statesmen, it may be believed that lesser politicians wasted little time on an unpopular cause. The average candidate for Parliament found that no votes were to be gained by advocating union, and speedily abandoned the subject for the more popular cries that bore welcome results on the day of the poll; others, more bold, who risked the loss of a few unionist votes by speaking openly in favour of local interests and provincial prejudices, probably found that they had won more support than they had lost by their temerity. And very many candidates solved a difficult tactical problem by simply sitting on the fence, following a time-honoured device by declaring themselves in favour of the principle of union, but opposed to the means suggested, and thereby contriving to make the best of both political worlds.¹

The more definite objections to Australian union were not

¹ It was stated that one reason for the popular indifference to the federal cause was the low quality of Australian politicians. But the argument will not stand examination. It is true that Australian politicians were often not of very high standing. But only the more independent men favoured federation, and their arguments fell flat; it was too risky and likely to be unpopular for the average vote-catching demagogue, whose safe course was to flatter local prejudices.

without weight. The old local jealousies of state and state continued strong. Similar local jealousies had existed in Canada before federation in 1867; but they were not accentuated in Canada, as they were in Australia, by differences of climate as well as distance.¹ Canadian statesmen had had many difficulties to surmount before they could achieve national union through federation; but at least they had no semi-tropical province with a coloured-labour question to consider, such as confronted the architects of Australian union in Queensland.

And indeed Queensland, so far from thinking of union with the rest of the continent, had an acute problem of separation on hand within its own territories. A strongly-supported movement had been started in that colony for its division into three mutually independent provinces; an association was established in aid of this project, which issued an elaborate report on the subject,² and it was suggested that the two new divisions of a colony which had itself been carved out of the original domain of New South Wales should be known by the rather absurd names of Carpentaria and Capricornia.³

But Queensland was only one of the obstacles to Australian

¹ Semi-tropical Queensland was always considered to be on a different footing from the temperate southern states, both by unionists and anti-unionists; and Parkes, in his project of federation adumbrated in the *Melbourne Review* of 1879, suggested that Queensland as well as West Australia should be left out of the union. In the former case climate, in the latter case distance and lack of population, probably determined his proposal. Similarly in Canada, fifteen years before, there had been some opposition to the inclusion of British Columbia, which also lay isolated and almost uninhabited in the extreme west, in the Dominion. Curiously enough, rich gold deposits were discovered in both these despised territories, which have since had an ample revenge.

With regard to climate, Dr. Johnson once asked, 'What is climate to happiness? What proportion does climate bear to the complex system of human life?' A good many people in his own day could have enlightened the excellent tory as to the difference a good or bad climate makes to happiness; and history shows again and again that it has a considerable effect on politics, which are after all one aspect of the complex system of life.

² *First Annual Report of the North Queensland Separation Council*, dated 14th June 1886. There was much to be said for the division of Queensland into sub-provinces.

³ *Lang's Coming Event*.

union ; there were as many obstacles, in fact, as there were separate states. New South Wales resentfully remembered that the younger colonies had revolted from her parental authority in earlier days, and asked with some bitterness why they should advocate union as essential in 1890 when they had denounced union as intolerable in 1850. West Australia, which had only just obtained full responsible government, had naturally no wish to resign any of her rights to a general continental union ; and the fact that the eastern colonies often referred to their huge western neighbour as an upstart and a Cinderella hardly smoothed the path of union in that direction. South Australia, too, distrusted Victoria, and Victoria was suspicious of New South Wales.

Another argument that appealed to each colony with equal force, was the knowledge that the federation of the whole must diminish the importance of each individual division. The provincial parliaments would tend to sink to mere local councils when a superior parliament legislated for all ; the provincial premiers would be little more than local politicians when greater men perorated in a Commonwealth Assembly ; and the provincial capitals would be less important than the city which was eventually chosen as federal capital.

But the very mention of a capital roused the bitterest of animosities among rival partisans. Sydney was the oldest city in Australia, Melbourne the largest, and Adelaide modestly claimed the most culture ; each therefore thought its title to be the capital of the whole continent sufficiently established. And each in consequence had to pay the penalty of municipal ambition in hearing taunts and insults and disparaging comments passed upon its buildings, its citizens, its air, its water, and even its drains, by the heads of the two rival municipal factions.¹

¹ It was finally agreed as the only satisfactory way out of the difficulty, that a new federal capital should be founded, after the example of the United States. A prolonged wrangle between New South Wales and Victoria resulted in an arrangement that the federal capital of Australia

The eternal fiscal question was well to the fore among the objections adduced against Australian union. Any form of union that was worth anything, it was said, presupposed fiscal union and intercolonial free trade. Now there were certainly many obvious advantages in intercolonial free trade; but every commercial interest took fright at the mere mention of the phrase, and each colony jealously maintained its own fiscal barriers against its neighbour.

The highly protected manufacturing state of Victoria insisted that New South Wales should abandon its traditional free trade policy. The latter retorted that it would be easier for Victoria to lower her tariff than for New South Wales to raise one. And South Australia advanced the argument that if intercolonial free trade were once in existence, her own industries would be ruined by floods of exported goods from Victoria.¹

An equally complicated and ultimately not less difficult question concerned the necessary adjustment of the provincial and federal debts under union. Each of the colonies had borrowed somewhat heavily in the English money market. Some critics held that they had borrowed extravagantly;² others declared that they had borrowed no more than their undeveloped resources justified them in doing. Whether that was true or not was hardly germane to the immediate argument; what was really important was the fact that they

should be situated in the territory of the former state, but that it should not be at Sydney nor within a hundred miles of the metropolis. In the meantime the Federal Parliament was to sit at Melbourne until the new capital was ready. The people of Sydney were inclined to take these stipulations as an insult, but they appear to have consoled themselves with the reflection that nothing better could be expected from the far inferior citizens of Melbourne.

The site of the new capital was eventually fixed in 1909 at Yass-Canberra, and plans and designs were submitted and published by official authority.

¹ Speech of Premier Playford, 1890.

² See, for a scathing indictment of Australian state finance, Wilson's *An Empire in Pawn*; for a more moderate statement, a paper by Fenton on *Australian Federal Debt* (1892).

had borrowed unequally, and that their debts had to be consolidated. And no man likes the prospect of being burdened with part of his neighbour's bills.

Such were the chief reasons that influenced Australians against the union of their country; and to these reasons, few of which could be dismissed as altogether without weight, was added the silent influence of every conservative element in the community, that strong but often unseen power which bids men leave well alone lest the good should become worse and not better; that complacency at the progress which has been made under known conditions, and distrust of the possibilities which await men under unknown conditions; in a word, all those influences which give stability to a community, and which were certain to be found strongly supporting the union when once union had been achieved, were now as strongly opposing the union and supporting the cause of the individual states.

The interplay and opposition of these various and conflicting forces made Australian union in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. On the whole, the balance in the trembling scales of public opinion proved in favour of union but against close union; the colonies were willing, or perhaps it would be more correct to say they were not unwilling, to accept a more or less loose federal tie with a common general constitution.

**The Even
Balance of
these
Contrary
Influences.**

Australian statesmen, fortified by past political experience, rejected that rope of sand, a confederation of the type that leaves the various provinces sovereign states and the central authority impotent.¹ Such a constitution is useless in

¹ This was the type of constitution advocated by Jefferson and the early American democrats. It proved a failure between 1783 and 1787, but it was still advocated by the democrats for many years. See vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv. I notice that it was also advocated in the British West Indies in 1911, in opposition to the scheme of a general federation suggested by Gideon Murray.

peace and worse than useless in war, since it has a delusive appearance of strength that might deceive a friend but could never deceive a foe.

But while Australians refused this political sham, they would not have an absolute legislative and executive union, such as prevailed in the United Kingdom, and has since been achieved in South Africa ;¹ they were therefore forced to fall back upon the middle course between a loose confederation and an absolute union, and to frame their general constitution somewhat after the type of those in operation in the United States and Canada.²

But even here there was room for choice and a selection of means and methods. The original constitution of the United States tends to exalt the authority of the individual states and to depress the authority of the central power ; the constitution of the Dominion of Canada, on the other hand, tends to exalt the authority of the central power and to depress the authority of the provinces. It is significant of the narrow balance in favour of union over separation in Australia that the makers of the future Commonwealth constitution deliberately preferred the example of the United States to that of the Canadian model, the less centralised to the more centralised piece of statecraft.

Of the three general types of union among constitutional states, therefore, the Australians chose neither the strongest—an absolute union of legislatures, nor the weakest—a mere confederative alliance ; they chose the medium bond. But in making their choice they decided on the weaker rather than the stronger form of federal union—a fact which shows decisively how great was the power of the provincial states and of local provincial feeling in the antipodes.

But the reliance on the example of the United States

¹ See vol. vi. bk. xxvi.

² For an analysis of the United States' constitution, see vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv. ; for the Canadian, vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. v.

rather than that of Canada demonstrated much more than the strength of provincial feeling in Australia. It demonstrated much more than the admiration of one people of English stock, which was slowly feeling its way towards nationhood, for another people of English stock which had already achieved nationhood. It proved that there existed a body of political opinion in Australia which favoured the republican system of the United States rather than the monarchical system of the United Kingdom; it indicated the presence of a political school which favoured separation from the United Kingdom and the complete independence of Australia. That school was never indeed very powerful, and even such influence as it possessed tended to diminish towards the close of the nineteenth century; but its existence, although not of decisive importance, was not entirely without effect among the causes working for and against Australian union.

Republican
Feeling in
Australia.

The question at issue, therefore, was not merely whether Australia should be united, but whether that union should be within or without the empire, and whether it should take republican or monarchical form.

Australia, isolated as she was from the rest of the world, was not too remote from the main currents of contemporary political thought to feel that wave of republican sentiment which threatened and even overturned thrones on the continent of Europe, and which claimed some prominent if rather academic supporters in Britain. Unlike the Canadians, who lived too close to the United States to have much belief in the superiority of republican institutions,¹ many Australians, fully conscious of the manifest defects of the

¹ See vol. iii. bk. xi. chs. iv. and v. The elevation of Canada to the rank of a kingdom within the Empire was suggested by a Canadian statesman at the time when federation was being discussed, but rejected in England, where the anti-imperial sentiment was then at its height. A few years later, when Disraeli proclaimed Queen Victoria Empress of India, it might have been adopted, but was apparently overlooked.

system of government in the British Empire, admired at a distance the method of government which they could not imitate without breaking the imperial tie. The democratic citizens of Victoria and New South Wales envied the boasted simplicity of manners and equality of rank which prevailed in the North American Republic; and some antipodean politicians perhaps coveted the ample opportunities of corruption which existed under the successors of the incorruptible Washington. Some drew elaborate comparisons between the disunited British states on the Atlantic in 1783 and the disunited British states on the South Pacific a century later;¹ and many speakers and writers uttered the aspiration that a United States of Australia should be formed, and professed the patriotic belief that its future would be not less glorious than that of its mighty elder brother among English nations, the United States of North America.

Associated with this republican school, but not necessarily always identical with it, was a distinctive movement in

**The Separ-
atist Move-
ment in
Australia.**

Australia for separation from the empire. Separation was indeed a political possibility, although hardly ever a political probability for some years during the later nineteenth century—a possibility which was openly discussed as something more than an academic question in England at the height of the anti-imperial movement,² a possibility which was furthered by the language of not a few politicians in Australia. Anthony Trollope the novelist, who visited the antipodes in 1871, and published an account of his impressions, came to the conclusion that separation was probable; Archibald Forbes the journalist declared

¹ It was possible to draw a fairly close parallel, except for the fact that the thirteen American colonies had separated from the Empire and the five Australian colonies had not. The comparison had at least one use, in that it drew the attention of Australians to the weakness of a mere Federal Council or Confederation, such as existed in America during and immediately after the American Civil War.

² See vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.

that federation would not be achieved while Australia remained within the Empire.¹ And a well-known clerical politician of the day at Sydney, Dr. Lang, a quarrelsome Presbyterian minister whose loss Scotland survived with equanimity and whose presence Australia tolerated with patience, had produced a flatulent book upon the subject in 1870, in which he foretold the coming event of the entire freedom and independence of the antipodes, and declared that separation would prove the more excellent way for all parties.² He anticipated an immediate improvement in education, religion, and morality if the colonies severed the imperial connection and established a republic whose capital was at Sydney ;³ and when faced with the objection that, however moral and religious a virgin the independent Australia of the future might be, she lacked the strength to defend herself from the rude attack of any foreigner who desired to possess her, the angered cleric could only answer with some lack of logic, ' Away with such rubbish ! '

The book would have been more dangerous to imperial unity had it been less stupid ; but it would scarcely have been published at all had there not been some support for its views.

But the separatist movement in Australia failed. It was never adopted as a settled policy by any political party in any of the colonies. It never appealed to more than a numerically insignificant and not very influential minority. Its spokesmen were hardly of sufficient weight or standing to convince the people, who as a whole were far from disloyal to the imperial connection ; and the definite repudiation of the separatist doctrines by politicians

Its Failure.

¹ *London Nineteenth Century*, 1883. See also *United Service Magazine*, January and March, 1891.

² *The Coming Event, or Freedom and Independence*, by Lang.

³ Marcus Clarke in 1877, while agreeing with Lang as to the foundation of a republic (see the previous chapter) disagreed as to the capital, which he placed in New Zealand.

like Sir Henry Parkes naturally did much to discredit the anti-imperial school in the eyes of the public.¹

The main supporters of the separatist school were those with grievances, real or imaginary, and prejudices, well or ill founded, against England.² They were assisted, but not perhaps very appreciably, by the geographical isolation of Australia, by the inevitable tendency of widely separated communities to diverge in thought, and by the ineradicable impulses of human nature. There will always be some among the younger members of the family who desire to leave the parental roof and to set up house for themselves.³

The fact that there were so few supporters of separation in Australia, however, shows that the mistakes of Britain in dealing with her antipodean colonies had either not been serious, or that circumstances had allowed her to retrieve those mistakes. But even to those who professed themselves unmoved by sentimental attachment or the mysterious sympathies of kindred race and blood, there were strong utilitarian

¹ In a speech delivered in 1889, Parkes remarked that 'What the Americans had done by war, the Australians could bring about in peace without breaking the ties that held them to the mother country.'

Ten years earlier he wrote (*Melbourne Review*, 1879) that the British connection 'would receive new elements of durability and definiteness from Australian union.'

² See a letter cited at the opening of bk. xxii. for some of these grievances or prejudices.

³ A similar but earlier separatist agitation in Canada was even less successful (vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. v.). In that case it sprang directly from Britain's free trade policy.

I doubt whether the separatist and republican feeling in Australia would ever have attained any influence had members of the English royal family been appointed as governors of the colonies. It was difficult for young Australians to be enthusiastically loyal to the British Crown when few of them had ever seen even one of its distant relatives. Had Australia been declared a kingdom of the British Empire, as it was suggested by Canadians that Canada should be, and a British Royal prince been appointed to Sydney, probably little would have been heard of Australian republicanism.

This is, of course, all speculation and hypothesis, and therefore best confined to a footnote; although I observe that some modern authors prefer to air their theories in the text, to keep the facts down in the basement, and to leave literary style and interest outside altogether.

arguments in favour of maintaining the imperial connection. For not only did Britain defend Australia against the attack of possible enemies, but British capital had been largely instrumental in developing Australian industries, in building Australian railways, in financing Australian governments; and without the steady fertilising stream of British capital that flowed through the five continental colonies of the antipodes their progress would have been far less rapid. It is said, indeed, that capital is independent of politics, and that it is irresistibly drawn wherever good security or fair interest is offered. That is true, but it is not the whole truth; for the series of Colonial Stock Acts which were passed by the Imperial Parliament in the years 1877, 1892, and 1900, and the Trustee Act passed by the same authority in 1893, gave to certain colonial securities a standing as trustee stocks in the British market which largely increased their public value; and this important privilege, although well earned by colonies which had always respected their financial obligations, would hardly have been granted by Britain had the colonies thrown off their allegiance.

The question whether the union of Australia should take place within or without the British Empire was therefore answered emphatically by a large loyalist majority; but if the republican and separatist movements died from lack of support, there was nevertheless widespread admiration of the United States in Australia, and in this respect the most steadfast imperialists were hardly behind the advocates of separation and republicanism. Sir Henry Parkes himself on one occasion referred to 'the rich stores of political knowledge collected by the framers of the Constitution of the United States' as a valuable aid to those who were preparing to frame the Australian Constitution; and Alfred Deakin acknowledged that the example of the United States had been continuously in the mind of the delegates at one of the most important of the intercolonial

Admiration
of United
States in
Australia.

conferences for the discussion of the proposed Constitution for the future Commonwealth.¹ 'At the Australian Federal Convention,' he wrote, 'copies of *The Federalist* were in every hand, the names of Hamilton, Madison, Adams, and Jefferson on every lip; while the most effective peroration at the Melbourne Convention in 1890 was couched in the words of Washington.'

The first definite step on the long road that led finally towards Australian union was taken in 1880, when a conference was held at Sydney to consider the general question of federation. Its deliberations soon made it evident that public opinion had advanced in a unionist direction since the intercolonial postal conference of 1873, but that it had not advanced very far. Sir Henry Parkes, the most prominent Australian statesman of the day, and the only one who had consistently expressed his belief in federation for many years, was the leading spirit in the debates; and Parkes himself was forced to admit that the day had not yet come for the construction of a federal Constitution. But at the same time he advanced the contention that the day had come when 'a number of matters of much concern to all the colonies might be dealt with more effectually by some federal authority than by the colonies separately.'

His contention was discussed, denied, and approved in various quarters during the next few months. On the whole, approval predominated; and when in 1883 another intercolonial conference assembled at Sydney, an attempt was made to translate the judiciously vague resolution of Parkes into

¹ Deakin in *Scribner's Magazine*, 1891. Other references to America and Australian federation may be found in Parkes' *Australia and the Imperial Connection* (1884), and *Speeches on Federation* (1890); Carnarvon's *Annexation and Federation* (1884); Beadon's *Australian Federation* (1889); Clarke's *Australia and the Imperial Connection* (1891); Killworth's *Federation* (1892); *The Commonwealth and the Empire* (1895).

This tendency to study the history and example of the United States had its effect, not only on the federation of Australia, but on the White Australia movement. See bk. xxii.

fact. The several delegates began to debate the creation of a federal legislature, its constitution, powers, and equipment; and this debate was a plain sign that political opinion had again advanced in a unionist direction since the previous conference.

The reason for such an advance was clear. Questions of foreign policy, the control of the Pacific Ocean, and the expansion of British authority over the neighbouring islands, had loomed above the horizon in the interval. Australians had been quick to recognise that in this matter their divisions were a source of weakness, and therefore they were ready to agree to the formation of some central body, which was to be in charge of 'the relations of Australasia with the islands of the Pacific,' and similar external affairs which affected every colony alike.

But there agreement ended. The conference was hopelessly divided on internal questions, and the delegates were plainly unwilling to entrust the proposed new legislature with any real power. As practical politicians they knew that where the power of the purse was withheld, everything was withheld; but they would allow the new legislature no control over public revenue or expenditure, so insistent were they on preserving every iota of the old state rights. Nor would public opinion have sanctioned such federal control, even had the delegates been prepared to allow it.

The conference, which had sat with closed doors, and which therefore evoked suspicion from curious outsiders—suspicion diligently fomented by opponents of federation—nevertheless had some result. It split the advocates of union into two parties; and it resulted in the creation of a Federal Council, whose first session was opened at Hobart in February 1886, and was attended by delegates from Tasmania, West Australia, Fiji, Queensland, and Victoria.

The unionist split was hailed with delight by the anti-

The Federalist Split.

federalists, who were probably still in a considerable majority in every colony. The division lay between the supporters of a more or less complete form of union, with a supreme Australian Parliament endowed with full powers of legislation and taxation, and the supporters of a loose common bond which was nothing more than an alliance or confederation, and which left the real power in the constituent states.¹ The latter party won at the outset, and the creation of the Federal Council was the visible proof of its success ; but the former party, headed by Parkes and a few stalwarts, secured the ultimate victory.

In neither case, however, was the victory complete. The advocates of a loose confederation were utterly routed by facts, and the trend of events ; the advocates of close union had to abate some of their demands, and to agree upon a compromise which contained considerable elements of weakness in the final draft of the constitution.

The Federal Council failed altogether. A purely consultative and deliberative body, it had no inherent power, and it could obtain no influence ; a weakly babe from the first, it died unlamented and unloved.

Failure of the Federal Council. Anti-federalists and complete federalists both proclaimed its impotence, which was in truth self-evident to all mankind. None of the colonies took it seriously, and New South Wales, under the direction of Parkes, refused to be represented at its deliberations altogether.² Had the smaller states refrained from attending, the Council might have survived awhile ; but when the mother colony of Australia declined to recognise it, its doom was sealed.

Parkes had to bear the brunt of some abuse from the loose federalists for his action, for abuse is a commodity which is not less plentiful in Australia than in other English com-

¹ Fundamentally the same political difference as that between Hamilton and Jefferson in the United States. Vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv.

² New Zealand and South Australia also refused to send delegates.

munities where free speech is often very free speech indeed ; but that was of little moment to the old politician, who had received and returned a good deal of political dirt in his time. He had long since gripped the truth that union, to be worth anything, must be a real union, not an imposing sham with every dignity and no power ; and he bided his time for an opportunity to state his case afresh.

The failure of the Federal Council ¹ marked the end of the second stage of the road towards union. The advocates of a loose confederacy were obviously beaten, and they had now to choose between a close union and no union at all. The advocates of close union, on the other hand, carried no conviction to a reluctant and indifferent public, and the anti-federalists appeared to have won all along the line.

It seemed clear that in deciding her political organisation Australia must have all or nothing ; and for some time it seemed equally clear that she would choose nothing.

But at what appeared to be the darkest hour of Australian unionism, General Bevan Edwards issued his report on Australian defence. Its effect was instantaneous.

Everybody agreed that defence must henceforth be a primary consideration. Everybody likewise agreed that some measure of inter-state union, or at least of inter-state co-operation, was necessary to secure a satisfactory scheme of defence. The anti-federalist was compelled to admit that the isolated action of each individual state would lead to overlapping, extravagance, and military weakness. The supporters of the moribund Federal Council—it still had supporters, for men will defend their own children even at the point of death—could not deny that the Federal Council as originally planned had no control over defence. But the advocates of close union, the only scheme of political organisation which would ensure a satisfactory plan of internal

**The Later
Conferences,
1890-7.**

¹ There are several volumes of the *Proceedings of the Federal Council*.

defence, took occasion by the hand, and again enforced their views on a yielding but still reluctant people.

The immediate consequence was a resumption of the federal conferences. A preliminary convention was held at Melbourne in 1890, and in the following year a great National Australasian Convention met at Sydney.

That Convention was the most remarkable assembly of statesmen that had ever met together on Australian soil. At its head was the now aged Sir Henry Parkes, who had not only undertaken in his seventy-fifth year a vigorous public campaign on behalf of federation, but who could point to nearly a quarter-century of consistent advocacy in favour of Australian union. By his side was a still more aged veteran, a white-haired weather-beaten man who had assisted in the government of one of the young Australian colonies fifty years before; and this ancient pioneer of the growing Empire of England in the south was an aristocrat of the true Whig stock from Britain, yet one withal who displayed the strange contradiction that he embraced democracy with all the ardour of a landless immigrant of twenty. Such was Sir George Grey, the representative of New Zealand in the Australasian Convention.¹ Sir John Forrest, the first premier of the young colony of West Australia, had crossed a continent to aid the building of national unity; near to this pioneer of an infant community sat Edmund Barton, a representative from the oldest of the Australian colonies, who had coined the pregnant phrase that went to the heart of the discussion:

¹ After this conference New Zealand took no further part in the negotiations for Australian federation. In 1891 the New Zealand Parliament passed a resolution which declared that, 'looked at from every point of view, the whole weight of the argument is against New Zealand entering into any federation except with the mother country.'

A New Zealand politician, observing that the distance between Australia and New Zealand was twelve hundred miles, remarked that here were twelve hundred good arguments against the union of continent and islands in one political federation—a remark that would have applied, a fortiori, to the federation with Britain suggested in the official resolution.

'A nation for a continent, and a continent for a nation.'¹ There, too, with the veteran Parkes and Grey, was another representative of the younger school of Australian statesmen, Alfred Deakin of Victoria, the most philosophic politician and perhaps the most convincing orator in the whole assembly.²

All the seven states of British Australasia were represented at the Convention, and those who were summoned to attend the great assembly may well have been inspired, as they met together in the beautiful metropolis of the antipodes, at the thought of the work before them and the work that had already been done. A bare century previously Australia had been the place of exile in which thousands of unhappy men had been doomed to miserable years of punishment. It was now the home of free and prosperous communities, which lacked nothing but unity to make them a nation. When so much had been done under adverse conditions in the past, what might not be done under better conditions in the future? When so great a work remained to be done by those now charged with its achievement, how heavy and yet how honourable was their responsibility that undertook it!

Whatever the thoughts of the delegates, their work was sound. The Sydney Convention drew up a draft Constitution, and debated its provisions word by word and sentence by sentence. The result of their labours formed the very bedrock of the future Commonwealth; but for the time at

¹ Edmund Barton was born at Sydney in 1849. Educated at Sydney University, he studied law and entered provincial politics. He was Speaker of the New South Wales Assembly from 1883 to 1887.

² Alfred Deakin was born in 1856 in Victoria. He studied at Melbourne University, and was engaged in law and journalism in addition to politics. He entered the Victorian Parliament in 1879. His eloquence soon brought him to the fore; but besides the great services he did his country in advocating federation, he was responsible for large irrigation works in his native province. In order to extend his knowledge of irrigation Deakin travelled extensively in the United States, Egypt, Italy, and India.

least the labour seemed thrown away. The people still distrusted the idea of union, even though complete unification was now abandoned, and federal proposals took its place; and the debates in the State Parliaments on the proposals of the Sydney Convention showed no enthusiasm whatever, and no abatement of the old sectional differences and jealousies.

It was more particularly in New South Wales and West Australia that the draft Constitution was unpopular. The latter colony was too young for its secession to have wrecked Australian union; but the adherence of New South Wales was vital. And in the mother colony two parties professed themselves definitely and unalterably against federation. Sir George Reid, a politician who owed his public influence more to his ready wit than to solid merit,¹ led a fiscal campaign in which he put free trade above federation, the commercial ideal above the national; and he bitterly compared New South Wales to an abstainer who proposed to set up house with five drunkards. And the rising Labour Party, which had recently attained some power in the state, but would have had no influence at all in the larger federation, condemned union root and branch as a proposal that was steeped in imperialism, and would crush the workers under a military despotism. It is one of the curiosities of political inconsistency that, a few years after federation had been achieved against its will, the Labour Party attained more power in

¹ Sir George Reid was born in an Ayrshire village, the son of a Presbyterian minister. When seven years old his parents took the lad to New South Wales; in 1880 he entered the State Parliament, becoming premier in 1894. After opposing federation for some years he finally professed himself converted, deserted the State Parliament for the Federal Legislature, and was federal premier in 1904-5. In 1910 he was appointed first High Commissioner for Australia in London.

His opponents gave him the nickname of Yes-No Reid; but his wit was often too much for them. At one hostile political meeting a bag of flour was thrown over him; whereupon he remarked to the audience, 'You will notice, gentlemen, the more violently I am assaulted by my enemies the whiter I appear.' A huge man physically, I remember hearing him remark at an official banquet in London that he was the only man who represented a whole continent, and that he felt he could never represent anything smaller.

the Federal Legislature than in the State Parliaments, and was the foremost in wishing to enlarge the centralising machinery which it controlled, at the expense of the provincial liberties which it had once extolled.¹

Against such opposition the federal idea seemed to make no headway. One anti-federal politician boasted that federation was as dead as Julius Cæsar;² but the supporters of federation did not allow their cause to go by default, and they undertook a more active policy to secure their ends. Federal leagues were formed, and meetings held in favour of union, and these were not without their influence on public opinion.

But it is probable that the financial panic of 1893 had more effect in hastening federation than all the arguments of its supporters. The economic crisis which affected public and private credit throughout Australia showed clearly the economic interdependence of the various colonies in a convincing manner that came home to every business man and most private citizens; and it knocked the bottom clean out of the contention, advanced at many meetings in New South Wales, that fiscal differences were more important than national union. Free trade had not saved the mother colony from the crisis, nor had protection saved Victoria.

Two years later, in 1895, a Federal Conference was held at Hobart, at which the important suggestion was made that a direct vote of the whole people should be taken on the question of federation, and that if a majority was obtained in three of the States it should suffice. A great popular

¹ It may be added that, in the stress of the election campaign of 1910, Deakin, one of the leaders of the federation movement, accused the Labour Party of being complete unionists. There were good grounds for the accusation; but it came rather curiously from Deakin.

² It is a favourite but very foolish device of politicians to boast that the causes they oppose are dead. After the great Liberal victory at the British general election of 1906, many Liberals boasted that imperialism and the policy of Imperial Federation was dead. (See particularly A. G. Gardiner, editor of the London *Daily News*, in the *Contemporary Review*, 1911.) The corpse proved an uncommonly lively one.

Convention followed at Bathurst in the following year, with further conferences at Adelaide and Sydney in 1897; and the subject was again discussed in London with the Imperial Government on the occasion of Victoria's Diamond Jubilee the same year. In 1898 the whole question was for the first time submitted to the direct popular vote.

The result was a gratifying surprise to the federalists. In each of the four states which voted a majority was obtained in favour of federation. In Victoria and Tasmania the majority was overwhelming; in South Australia it was two to one; even in New South Wales, the home of state rights, there was a bare majority for union.¹

The majority in the mother colony showed the trend of opinion, but it showed also that the two parties were very evenly balanced. A general election was held to determine the question, at which even the opponents of federation professed themselves in favour of the draft Constitution, provided changes were made in various details; in consequence, every member of the New South Wales Parliament was now pledged to some kind of union with the neighbouring colonies.

It was now generally felt that federation was assured. A conference of state premiers was held in 1899, in which only the inter-state financial problem presented serious difficulties; and after another popular vote in New South Wales, the federal Constitution was adopted.² It was substantially the

¹ The actual figures were: New South Wales—for federation, 71,595; against, 66,228. Victoria—for, 100,520; against, 22,099. South Australia—for, 35,800; against, 17,320. Tasmania—for, 11,797; against, 2,716. It had been agreed that an affirmative majority of ten thousand was necessary in every state before federation could be carried, and this was obtained in all save New South Wales and Tasmania.

² The figures at this referendum were: for federation, 107,420; against, 82,741. A referendum held in Queensland gave 38,488 for federation, and 30,966 against. Another referendum was held in West Australia, while the Commonwealth Constitution was being discussed in the Imperial Parliament, the result being 44,800 for, and 19,691 against federation. The emphatic majority in this last case caused considerable surprise.

same Constitution that had been drawn up at the Sydney Convention eight years before.

Subject to the certain approval of the Imperial Government¹—which was given after the Australian Constitution Bill had been discussed and passed unanimously in the Imperial Parliament in 1900²—the cause of Australian union was now won. The victory of the centripetal principle was not indeed complete, and the provinces were still able to retain much of that power and influence which their representatives had so jealously guarded during twenty years of discussion; but it was now determined that a central federal authority should be set up, which should possess certain carefully restricted but still extensive prerogatives, and this federal authority was to be called the Commonwealth of Australia.

A faint flavour of republicanism still clung to the good old English word Commonwealth; a slight recollection of regicide and revolution had survived the two and a half centuries since Cromwell had ruled the short-lived Commonwealth of England. That was in itself no objection to the diminishing republican element in Australia;³ but the supporters of

¹ Although short-sighted political theorists had sometimes recommended that political divisions between the colonies should be fostered, since they would on that account remain weak, and therefore amenable to imperial control (see vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. i.), the Imperial Government had never, even in its worst days, been guilty of the mean policy of fomenting dissensions among the overseas communities in order to strengthen its own position. It had, in fact, even pressed union on the colonies when they had been opposed to the idea, and both it and they had suffered in consequence. (See vol. i. bk. iv. ch. i.)

² A conference was opened at the Colonial Office in London, under the presidency of Joseph Chamberlain, to discuss the Commonwealth Constitution, on 5th April 1900. The Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 14th May, and discussed and passed unanimously, every party approving it. Read a third time on 25th June, it passed the House of Lords without opposition on 5th July, and the Royal Assent was given four days later. The debates, which were not remarkable, have been reprinted in *Debates and Speeches on the Commonwealth Constitution Act*.

³ In 1893 a Democratic Social Federation at Sydney endeavoured to pass resolutions in favour of the founding of an Australian republic. This was the last dying groan, the death-rattle in the already choking throat,

monarchy were able to adduce good authority for the word,¹ and it was generally approved of as the best available.

The actual Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth, as finally agreed upon between the colonial statesmen and the Imperial Government, owed most of its foundations, its ultimate conception of political philosophy, almost entirely to the unwritten British model, the grand origin of all modern constitutions that are based on the representative principle. But it derived much of its superstructure, many of its secondary details, and a little even of the binding cement of its foundations, to the example of the United States, whose Constitution had long been studied and admired by all parties in Australia. It owed considerably less, but still it owed a little, to Canada, of those who had advocated the federation of Australia on a republican basis.

Republicanism and separatism existed after the foundation of the Commonwealth, but they were not advocated by responsible men. There are, however, some signs of those sentiments in the words attributed to the federal premier, Andrew Fisher, in the *Review of Reviews* (England), July 1911. But Fisher first repudiated the interview and then repudiated part of the repudiation; and the editor of that publication, W. T. Stead, was an extraordinary person who professed to have dealings with the spirit world, and who had published what purported to be an interview with the ghost of Gladstone a year or two before. His dealings with the quick and the dead seem to have been equally unfortunate.

¹ The word had been proposed by Parkes in 1891, and was preferred to United Australia, the Federated States, and the Dominion. The latter title was particularly obnoxious, since it suggested imitation of Canada, which every patriotic Australian was anxious to avoid.

The expression had been in common use by Elizabethan writers; for instance:—

‘Civil dissension is a viperous worm
That gnaws the bowels of the Commonwealth.’

1 *King Henry VI.*

and

‘The Commonwealth is sick of their own choice.’

2 *King Henry IV.*

Both quotations had a certain aptness at the time in Australia.

The word had been used by Elizabeth herself in her message to the Speaker of the Commons in 1593—‘Idle heads, which will meddle with reforming the Church and transforming the Commonwealth’; and it occurs in one of the Martin Marprelate tracts (*The Almond for a Parret*), ‘the care of all the Commonwealth.’

whose institutions Australia, as became an ambitious younger brother of somewhat different views, was at considerable pains not to imitate. And it owed something, a few of the essentially democratic innovations which it embodied in the historic fabric of English constitutional statecraft, to its own original deviations from the accepted routine of orthodox political doctrine. Like the nascent Australian nation, the Australian Constitution was the creation of an English people, of a young people, and of a people with the power of independent thought.

The preamble of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act opens with the statement that 'The people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God,¹ have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth, under the Crown of the United Kingdom.' This definite insistence on the indissolubility of the federal bond was due to remembrance of the split between northern and southern states of the American union in 1861, and to the anticipation of a similar split, which some political prophets had foretold in Australia; the reference to the British Crown was an indication that the monarchical principle had prevailed in Australia, as it had in Canada in 1867, and therefore it was an implied profession of faith in the essential unity of the British Empire; the allusion to the people was an affirmation of Australian reliance on the democratic principle. Neither the American nor the Canadian Constitutions had been submitted to the popular vote.²

¹ The blessing of God was besought in the Constitution of the United States, but not in that of Canada.

² The Australian Constitution is definitely democratic in its reliance on the people, and the Act embodying it specifically defines the Commonwealth as a federation of the people. This is absent from the Canadian Constitution; on the other hand, the Australian Constitution follows that of the United States in carefully omitting the word nation. Further, the word federal occurs fifteen times in the Australian Constitution, but only once in the Canadian. These verbalisms are not altogether without significance.

The Commonwealth was to be governed, like the Dominion of Canada, by a Governor-General appointed by and responsible to the Crown.¹ As in Canada and the United States, the executive head of the realm was to be paid an annual salary of £10,000 from the general revenues. He was the direct representative of the Crown, the commander-in-chief of the naval and military forces of all the Australian colonies ; and he was to be assisted by an advisory Federal Executive Council, similar to that which advised the Governor-General in Canada. But this Council—which was in practice the Commonwealth Cabinet of the day—was not to consist of more than seven members unless the Commonwealth Parliament determined otherwise, and their total salaries were not to exceed £12,000 a year.² Australia had already to meet so heavy a bill for the upkeep of the state governments that it could not permit unlimited extravagance on the part of the federal authority.

The Governor-General had the power of proroguing and dissolving Parliament ; and he could grant or reserve his assent on parliamentary Bills. But the Crown might disallow any Bill even after the Governor-General had given his assent, provided that such disallowance was announced within twelve months.

The Governor-General of Australia was not charged, as in Canada, with the appointment of the provincial or state governors. In Canada these latter were only lieutenant-governors, whose acts, and those of the provincial legislatures, could be vetoed by the Governor-General in Council. The Australian state governors were still appointed by the

¹ At the 1891 Sydney Convention Sir George Grey had proposed in the fullness of democratic zeal that the office of governor-general should be elective. But this was too much even for democratic Australians, and the suggestion was negatived by thirty-fives votes to three.

² It was also stipulated that they must be members of the Commonwealth Parliament within three months of assuming office.

Crown, and the Acts of their Parliaments were considered directly by the Crown. To that extent, therefore, the Australian federal union was less close than that of Canada, and the Australian states retained much of the power which the Canadian provinces had resigned; while the functions of the Commonwealth Governor-General were less extensive than those of the Dominion Governor-General, whose functions in turn were less extensive than those of the President of the United States.

Australia followed the example of Britain, the United States, Canada, and its own provincial states in dividing its Parliament into two chambers, which were named **The Commonwealth Parliament.**—after the American, not the British model—the Senate and the House of Representatives. In constitutional theory—and here also the American federal example was followed—the Senate represented the states, and the House of Representatives the people.

It is at once the privilege and the penalty of young communities that they have no feudal aristocracy, no landed interest of long descent and old renown, which can form a hereditary House of Lords after the British model. Neither the United States nor Canada has been exempt from the difficulty of forming a Senate, of forming a stable conservative element in the Constitution from a young and therefore necessarily somewhat unstable and radical people; but whereas in the former case the Senate elected by the states had become a power, in the latter the Senate nominated by the Crown for life was universally admitted to be the weakest link in the Constitution.

Australia had no hesitation in avoiding the Canadian model, not only because it had been unsuccessful, but because the method of nomination was not sufficiently democratic for the politicians of the antipodes. But even the American model was not democratic enough for the Australian Constitution, which rejected the American system of the election of

senators by the state parliaments, and substituted their direct election by the people.¹

In Australia, as in America, there were to be an equal number of senators for each state ; but whereas the American states were many in number, and the Australian states were few, six Australian senators instead of the American two were to be chosen from every state of the Commonwealth.

The Senate was to choose a president, and to decide questions by vote. When the votes were equal, the question was deemed to be decided in the negative. The president was to have a vote, but no casting vote, since that would have destroyed the theory of the equal representation of the states in the Federal Parliament.

The Senate was subject to the usual disabilities of a second chamber with regard to money Bills ; but any Bills which it had no power to amend itself it might request the House of Representatives to amend.

The popular House, the House of Representatives, was to consist of members elected by the people of the various states.

The House of Representatives. Like the members of the Senate, they were directly elected by the popular vote ; but the House of Representatives, which could increase the total number of its members if it wished, was never to have fewer than five members from any of the states of the Commonwealth. It was always to elect its members, above this minimum of five, in proportion to the population of the

¹ The appointment of a nominated Senate had been discussed at the Federal Conventions, and eventually rejected in favour of the elective principle.

The State Senate of New South Wales was nominated by the Crown, not elected. A suggestion had once been made that a hereditary House of Lords should be established in Australia ; it perished of overwhelming ridicule. A similar suggestion had been made as regards Canada (vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. v.), and the Canadian Constitution of 1791 contained a clause empowering the Crown to establish a hereditary aristocracy in that colony. It remained a dead letter, as did also the well-meant project of founding a provincial baronetage in Ontario, and the famous order of Caciques and Landgraves in the abortive Constitution of Carolina (vol. i. bk. iv. ch. iii.).

state; but whenever its numbers were increased those of the Senate were also to be increased, in order that the proportion of two representatives to one senator should always be preserved.¹

The House of Representatives, like its prototypes in Britain and America, was presided over by a Speaker, who had no vote unless the numbers were equal on a division, in which case he had a casting vote.

Both senators and representatives were to be paid £400 a year for their services, 'until the Parliament otherwise provides.' In this matter Australia followed the example of the United States and Canada, and within a few years the Imperial Parliament followed the contagious and comfortable example of its children.

In the event of disagreement between the two Houses, a general election was to be held; if there was still no agreement, a joint sitting of the two Houses was to be held, at which an absolute majority was to decide. This was tantamount to placing the final power of control over the legislative machine in the popular chamber.

Failing disagreements between the two Houses, or the carrying of a vote of want of confidence in the ministry, Parliaments were to be triennial. This was one of the few matters in which Australia imitated New Zealand, and revived a system which England had abandoned.² At least it ensured that her people should have no lack of opportunity to express

¹ In the first Commonwealth Parliament New South Wales had twenty-six members, Victoria twenty-three, Queensland nine, South Australia seven, West Australia and Tasmania five each, in the House of Representatives.

² British Parliaments were triennial from 1694 to 1715, when the Septennial Act was passed, which remained in force until 1911. The Parliament Act of that year changed the duration of the Imperial Parliament to five years. The shorter the period that elapses, the less change is likely to occur in the personnel of the members of Parliament, and in the long run less public interest is likely to be taken when elections are frequent. But I imagine that the recording angel, who alone knows the number of lies told by candidates and their agents at general elections, weeps whenever Parliament is dissolved.

their political opinions ; but there were occasions when they appeared to be suffering from a surfeit of elections.

The Federal Parliament was charged with deciding all questions as to peace, order, and good government ; trade, commerce, taxation, bounties, and borrowing money for the Commonwealth ; the post, telegraph, and telephone services ; naval and military defence ; the care of lighthouses and coast lighting, and other measures for securing the safety of Australian shores, ports, and harbours ; questions relating to the census, currency, and coining—including banking and insurance, provided these did not infringe the authority of the states ; the control of quarantine, astronomical observations, weights and measures, bankruptcy, copyright, naturalisation, marriage and divorce laws, laws relating to parental rights, and old age pensions ; the administration of all justice, and immigration or emigration ; the conduct of foreign affairs, and questions relating to the northern islands, and the acquisition of property on just terms from any state or person ; the control of naval and military railways, the construction and acquisition of State railways with the consent of the states ; all matters referred to the Commonwealth Parliament by any of the State Parliaments, and matters incidental to the execution of any power vested by the Commonwealth Constitution in the Commonwealth Parliament or in either of its houses.

It was further laid down that all laws made by the Commonwealth Parliament within the limits of the Constitution were to be binding on every state, notwithstanding anything in the laws of any state ; and that although every original power of the states should continue as of old unless it was specifically reserved to the Commonwealth, in the event of a conflict between the two, the law of the Commonwealth was to prevail over that of the states. No alteration of the Constitution was to be made unless it was supported by

both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament with an absolute majority, and was subsequently approved by a referendum.

These latter provisions, which were of fundamental importance, tended to centralise power more and more in the hands of the Commonwealth ; and in this matter Australia approached towards, although it did not at first altogether reach, the examples of the United States and Canada, in both of which countries the federal authority had gained power at the expense of the provincial units.

Another important branch of the Commonwealth Constitution, which told heavily in favour of the federal authority, was that relating to finance. In the earlier, and even in some of the later, discussions concerning federation it had seemed that agreement over this essential matter would prove impossible ; yet without a financial concordat, as every delegate from every state well knew, federation would have been impossible.

**Authority
of the
Common-
wealth over
Finance.**

The financial history of the various Australian states was an intricate, difficult, and occasionally a rather delicate subject. The individual colonies had borrowed heavily to develop their natural resources, to construct roads and railways, to build harbours, and to promote settlements. Their credit was usually good, for they were prosperous and growing communities, and they had made full use of their credit on the London money market for more than forty years. The result was that, as a critic of Australian finance remarked, while the new Commonwealth would be the richest nation in the world, it would also be the most heavily indebted.

The criticism was justified by statistics. The first Australian public loan, which was raised by New South Wales in the year 1842 for the purpose of assisting immigration from England, had been for so modest a sum that the not very extensive internal resources of the colony were sufficient

to float it. The next loan which was required was raised in London without difficulty in 1855. Victoria followed the example of New South Wales in 1859; Queensland followed Victoria in 1861, two years after its establishment as a separate colony. South and West Australia had already raised money in London, the former in 1854, the latter in 1845; Tasmania followed suit in 1867.

The appetite, in finance as in other things, grows by what it feeds upon. Since the inaugural loans had been raised, repeated applications had been made to London for more; and London had supplied the required amounts, usually with little demur. A steady stream of British capital, as of British emigrants, flowed from the old country to the new; but the new men hardly kept pace with the borrowed money. In the year 1860 the total debt of Australia was £9,050,235—a sum of £7, 18s. 7d. per head of the population; by the year 1900 the total debt had increased to the enormous amount of £203,601,295—a sum of £53, 16s. 6d. per head of the population.¹

Not every colony was indebted in an equal amount.² And no colony had any desire to assume responsibility for the debt of any other colony, although no colony would have objected very seriously to pass its own debts over to the federal authority. Yet a consolidation of the various debts, as also of the various revenues and tariffs, into one common system, would have improved the position of all alike, and strengthened the finances of Australia. It was precisely this consolidation which appeared hopeless of attainment.

The difficulty was solved, in so far as it was solved, by a compromise which was called after its author, the Braddon

¹ The public debt of Australia continued to increase after federation. On 31st June 1910 the total sum borrowed and actually spent was £249,305,568.

² In 1900 the debt of New South Wales was £67,361,246; of Victoria, £53,071,275; of Queensland, £35,898,414; of South Australia, £26,117,845; of West Australia, £12,641,510; of Tasmania, £8,511,005.

Clause. Sir Edward Braddon,¹ one of the many Anglo-Indians who had settled in Tasmania after their official career in the East had closed, had been a delegate at the Federal Conventions; and his proposal, as finally amended and accepted, was that the entire revenue from all the states should be raised, for a period of at least ten years, or longer if the Federal Parliament should so determine, by the Commonwealth authorities; and that of the total net revenue thus raised not less than three-fourths should be returned to the states for their own expenditure. In addition, uniform customs dues were to be imposed by every state within two years.

The compromise, which was as satisfactory and as short of perfection and permanence as most compromises, saved the situation at the cost of a violent outburst of feeling in New South Wales. The mother colony, which was never guilty of ingratitude to her own memory, and which never forgot that the younger states were her own rebellious and upstart daughters, saw herself obliged to abandon her cherished free trade policy in order to come into line with the protectionist majority, as the only means of securing fiscal uniformity and the national union which her own old leader, Sir Henry Parkes, had so long advocated. She had had to abandon her cherished and very natural desire to see her own capital, the mother city of the continent, recognised as the capital of all Australia. And while smarting under these insults she saw herself obliged to accept the Braddon Clause, which diminished her authority over her own finances.

Anti-federal politicians assured the people they had been tricked, and by an ingenious perversion of the truth, declared

¹ Sir Edward Nicholas Coventry Braddon was born in 1829, and after a distinguished civil and military career in India, he settled in Tasmania in 1878. He took a leading part in the political life of the colony, and died in 1904. He was a brother of the well-known novelist, Miss Braddon, whose ingenious plots have given far more general satisfaction than the Braddon Clause.

that the Braddon Clause was a device to raise four times as much revenue as was in fact required. The deception was clever enough to have deceived the unwary ; but once the lie had been exposed, the anti-federal cause lost its hold in New South Wales.

An integral and important part of the Constitution concerned the administration of justice. It was enacted that a High Court should be established, and that all **The** judges should be appointed by the Governor-General in Council ; nor were they to be removed except by an address of both Houses of Parliament in the same session. **Judiciary.** In this Australia followed the excellent British rule for preserving the impartial administration of justice ; but it was further laid down that there should be no appeal to the Queen in Council from the decision of the High Court, unless the High Court should itself certify that the question was one which ought to be determined by Her Majesty in Council.

Except as thus provided, the Constitution was not to impair any right which the Crown might be pleased to exercise by virtue of its royal prerogative to grant special leave of appeal. The Commonwealth Parliament might make laws limiting such leave, but it was enacted that those laws must be reserved by the Governor-General for the consideration of the Crown.

This limitation caused considerable uneasiness in legal circles in England, which looked with jealousy on any limitation of the royal prerogative, such as this admittedly was ; and which understood, perhaps better than the framers of the Australian Constitution, the value of an attempt to preserve legal uniformity throughout the empire ; but the Australians refused to give way.

Their view was expressed in a human argument not without weight. ‘ The consciousness of kinship,’ said the Australian delegates, ‘ of a common blood and a common sense of duty,

the pride of race and history—these are links of empire. When the Australian fights for the empire, he is inspired by these sentiments ; but no patriotism was ever inspired or sustained by the thought of the Privy Council.' The argument may not have satisfied the lawyers ; but those who remembered that Australian troops were at that moment fighting by the side of the British in South Africa were in no mood to dissent.¹

Such was the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia. It was a compromise, probably the best available compromise, between the advocates of **Final Character of the Constitution.** national union and provincial rights. It had the strength and the weakness of most compromises ; it secured immediate if not enthusiastic popular support at the price of imperfections left for future remedies. It represented a victory for the principle of union, but not of close union ; and it was clear that a long struggle was still to come between the forces that had been so evenly balanced. And during the first years of the new Australian Commonwealth there was the same attempt on the part of the larger federal authority to extend its control over the smaller provincial units that had marked the early constitutional history of the United States.²

The real fault to be found with the Australian Constitution was that it exemplified that besetting sin of English democracy, a disposition to create too much legislative and administrative machinery. The six provinces of Australia had their own six parliaments, in addition to the one common assembly ; and even the most fervent admirer of constitutional government had to admit that this was more than adequate

¹ The Australian High Court, like the supreme court of the United States, very quickly justified its position and proved its impartiality and strength. Within the first decade of its existence it had disallowed several enactments of the Commonwealth Parliament on the ground that they were contrary to the Constitution.

² See vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv.

for a community whose total population was considerably less than four millions.¹

But if some Australians lamented this excess of political machinery, others perhaps recalled with satisfaction that their case was not so bad as it might be. Australia had a rather larger population than the United States at the foundation of the constitution of that republic; but whereas Australia had seven parliaments in 1901, the United States had fourteen in 1801. Canada had been almost equally fertile in constitutions,² and some of the small West Indian islands, the Bahamas, the Bermudas, and Barbados, had the full political machinery of two Houses of Parliament for a population of a few thousands.³

It was decided that the new Constitution of Australia should be proclaimed with proper pomp and befitting ceremony on the first day of the twentieth century—an auspicious day, it was felt, for the birth of a new nation and the inauguration of what some ardent patriots hoped would prove a new and better age. Special services of prayer and intercession were held in the churches an hour before midnight on the preceding day, and the old century and the old political order to which it had given birth in Australia died together. The midsummer sun of the antipodes rose the following morning, the 1st of January 1901, over the lavish decorations that heralded the celebration of national unity at Sydney—a city which indeed scarcely required new ornaments to deck her beauty; official congratulations passed to and fro, and the

**Proclama-
tion of the
Common-
wealth Con-
stitution,
1901.**

¹ Statesmen are scarce, particularly in a young country which has no leisured class; and with so many seats to be filled, it was impossible to get a very high grade of man to fill them all in Australia. There were not enough politicians to go round, as on the local councils in England. Indeed, it is said that in one of the State Parliaments it was necessary to pass a rule that the porters and attendants should not address members by their Christian names, nor drink with them in the bars of the House. Even in a democratic country it is wise to preserve some distinctions.

² Vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. v., and bk. xi. chs. iv. and v.

³ Vol. i. bk. ii. ch. vi., and vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. ii.

inevitable series of public banquets was given, at which the fare, as is usual on such occasions, was more enjoyable but less innocuous than the formal speeches.¹

And three weeks after the new nation was born, the Queen of England and the head of the whole British Empire died. The single span of Victoria's long reign stretched back to the days when convicts were still transported to Australia, when the Government of what was then the undivided colony of New South Wales was military and not constitutional, when the interior of the continent was hardly known, and its total population numbered hardly a hundred thousand. In that one reign the seeds of the new nation had been sown by the free immigrants who followed the convicts, had sprouted, grown, and were now bearing fruit.

The New
Nation.

The new nation was born as the aged queen lay dying; and with the proclamation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 the third of the great English nations overseas took its place by the side of the United States and the Dominion of Canada, its two elder brethren.

The first years in the life of a young nation, like the first months in the life of a young child, are a critical and anxious time. The mortality of infant communities is as heavy as that of little children; the whole world is strewn with the graves of both. And the newly-born nation resembles the newly-born child in that it cannot see far; it may cry loudly, but it cannot ease its pain; it may kick blindly in fretful agitation, but it cannot walk. Neither has much hold on life; with both the head is weak upon the trunk. The future character is largely unformed; and although the will is there, its direction is as yet uncertain.

But the healthy nation, like the healthy child, survives the

¹ See *London Times*, Jan. 2-10, 1901; *Sydney Mail* and other celebration numbers of the Australian journals. J. F. Hogan in the *Contemporary Review* (1901) says that the average Australian was apathetic over the celebrations.

perils of infancy. By the close of the eighteenth century the United States had outgrown the worst of those inter-state jealousies which had seemed about to wreck the republic in civil war. After the formation of the Dominion in 1867, Canada passed through a period of amazing growth without any serious troubles. And Australia was now to pass through the stress of one of her periodic droughts, to experience the inevitable friction between old provinces and new federation, and to feel some apprehension as to the very base on which her own existence and her national ideal rested.¹ And from these trials she too recovered, and marched forward to the fulfilment of her destiny.

¹ See the close of bk. xxii.

Book XX

THE PACIFIC OCEAN : 1578-1910

CHAPTER I

ENGLAND AND THE PACIFIC

CENTURIES before the united English Commonwealth in the antipodes was hammered on the anvil of statesmanship out of internal feuds and provincial jealousies, centuries before the first English, or even the first European vessel adventured its frail body on the Pacific Ocean, other men and other races had come and gone across those endless waters. Some tarried awhile on this small island, others on that ; some survived to salute the white man with welcoming caress or menacing spear, others had already vanished before his coming for ever.

The Pre-historic Pacific.

But of the scattered and unwritten annals of those ocean wanderers little or nothing is left. Mute memorials of forgotten peoples, rude images and carven statues, greet the stranger here and there ; old weather-beaten gods, searching in dumb enquiry for lost worshippers that have travelled on ahead to an unknown heaven, stare from solitary islands out into the silent deep ; but the deep answers not.¹

For the South Seas guard their secrets with jealous care,

¹ An account of the extraordinary sculptures and images on Easter Island, the creation of an unknown extinct people, has been published by the Hakluyt Society, with a full bibliography of the subject.

Similar mysterious remains exist on the Caroline Islands.

mocking gods and men alike ; the past and its peoples have for ever vanished, and this gross fantasy we call our earth has no more need of them or heed of them. Like the visions of dreams, like the voices of night or the mists of the morning, the ancient nomadic islanders of the Pacific are gone, their passing a mystery like the end that met them. The wandering voyagers who sped from isle to isle on frail raft or light canoe have sailed at last beyond all earthly seas, swept by the winds of unseen fate across the measureless horizon of death.

Others survived to greet the white man ; but these also are gone or going, as in due time the white man, too, may go and leave no memorial. Man builds his empire on solid continents ; but the ocean suffers its children awhile, and then mocks and devours them.

Spanish adventurer and Portuguese trader invaded the Pacific from west and east in the sixteenth century, but left less mark on its isles and archipelagoes than Malay pirate or Maori warrior of old. And few of their discoveries were made known at home. Although Spanish treasure ships passed regularly between the Philippines and Peru, the ocean they crossed remained almost a closed book to Europe, and accounts of their voyages were suppressed lest other nations should aspire to share the fortunes of Spain. The French at first hardly ventured so far afield ; the Dutch, too, had little use for a watery waste where commerce was lacking ;¹ and the English flag was barely known in the Pacific before the end of the eighteenth century.

The first English vessel to cross that ocean was Drake's *Golden Hind* in 1578. Eight years later the adventurer

¹ It must be remembered that few of the islands in the Pacific Ocean were known to the early European mariners or cartographers. One of the old English navigators remarks that there was no place where a vessel could cast anchor between America and Asia. Had the Spaniards not suppressed the knowledge of their discoveries other nations would certainly have followed them into the Pacific, and indeed the fact that their policy of concealment succeeded in giving them a monopoly of the Pacific Ocean for two centuries was its best, and only, justification.

Thomas Cavendish traversed the same seas ; but from that day English enterprise, fully occupied in the East Indies and on the Atlantic coast of America, left the far western and southern seas to others for nearly two hundred years. Commodore Anson indeed followed in Drake's track in the middle eighteenth century ;¹ but prudent British skippers of the mercantile marine, whose paths happened to lie across the Pacific, sometimes found it politic to hoist the Spanish flag on the broad seas that part Asia from America.² Between Calcutta and New York England had as yet no territorial footing whatever.

Nor was any attempt made to obtain a foothold on the western side of South America. Drake, Cavendish, and Anson came to destroy the power of Spain, not to build up the power of Britain. The errand of Byron, Wallis, and Cook was science and discovery, not colonisation.³ And the first settlement made by England in the southern seas was an accident, an unforeseen experiment carried out in solitude, unknown and for long disregarded by the English people at home.

But the history of the lonely little colony that was founded by mutineers from the *Bounty* on Pitcairn Island, the pioneer English settlement in the Pacific, **Pitcairn Island, 1790.** has a perennial and universal interest. The romance of its origin enthralles the schoolboy ; the lessons of its progress and decline may well attract attention from the student of human society.

On the 9th October 1787 the *Bounty*, two hundred and forty-five tons, Lieutenant William Bligh, R.N., left the Thames with a crew of forty-five officers and men on a voyage

¹ For Drake and Cavendish, vol. i. bk. i. ch. iii. ; for Anson, bk. v. ch. ii.

² See the instance cited in vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. ii.

³ See bk. xvii. ch. ii. Had the Scottish settlement in Panama (vol. i. bk. iv. ch. iii.) been successful, the course of British colonial history might have been altogether different. But it failed dismally.

of discovery in the south seas. Such voyages had been frequent of late years ; they were still considered hazardous and likely to lead to strange adventures, but none ever had so extraordinary and unlooked-for consequence as this.

The vessel proceeded with little incident to vary the slow monotony for some weeks. But Bligh's acts soon showed that his character already had the faults which years afterwards, when Governor of New South Wales, led to his deposition by the free settlers of that colony.¹ Although a capable seaman, he was irascible and unjust, and ready to bring accusations at large against the men under him of petty thefts and disobedience to orders.

In that age, and in that service, sailors were used to harsh treatment. But there is a limit to the patience of men. The crew grumbled at his insults, and Fletcher Christian, the ship's mate, at length rebelled ; and on 27th April 1789 he headed a mutiny while the vessel was in the South Seas near the island of Tahiti. It was successful : Bligh was overpowered, and cast adrift in the ship's launch with eighteen companions and sufficient provisions to last until they should make the nearest land ; and the *Bounty* proceeded under Christian's command with the remainder of the crew to Tahiti.

Bligh eventually made his way to England, after a terrible voyage of forty-six days in an open boat before he sighted land at Timor, three thousand six hundred miles from the scene of the mutiny ; but among the rebels open disagreement soon broke out, and the party divided. Most of the men determined to settle on the island of Mytea, where they were afterwards found by a vessel sent from England to

¹ See bk. xvii. ch. iv. The story of the mutiny has been written in detail by Lady Belcher, *The Mutineers of the Bounty*. The fortunes of the Pitcairn Islanders are discussed in Beechey's *Voyages* ; and there is some valuable information in the official Colonial Office Reports on Pitcairn Island for 1900 and 1901.

discover and arrest them, and then transported home and punished for their crime.

But nine of the crew decided to stand by Christian. Each of these men took to himself a Tahitian wife ; and this party, accompanied by a few Tahitian men and women who wished to follow them, twenty-seven persons in all, departed to establish themselves elsewhere.

The whole Pacific Ocean is strewn with islands and islets, nearly all of them fertile and fruitful, and many of them uninhabited by human beings. Some lie in the main road of ocean traffic ; others are solitary spots in a solitary sea. It was to one of the most remote and lonely of all these islands that Christian determined to conduct his fellow-mutineers.

In the small ship's library aboard the *Bounty*, along with nautical almanacs, rules for astronomical observations, and the officers' guides of the day, were some of the accounts that previous travellers had published of their voyages in the South Seas. One of these travellers, Captain Carteret, had described the extreme loneliness of Pitcairn Island, a volcanic rock some two miles long by three-quarters broad, the most remote of many remote islands in the Low Archipelago.¹ It was to this solitary spot that Christian led his men. Here at least they were safe from pursuit.

Early in the year 1790 the party landed on Pitcairn Island. Everything that could possibly be of any use was removed from the vessel ; planks, nails, bolts, and sails were taken ashore ; and that done, the hull of the *Bounty* was fired and sunk in the little inlet that has ever since been known as Bounty Bay.

The whole island was now divided into nine portions by Christian, and distributed equally among the nine white men. The Tahitians were omitted from the partition.

¹ It was discovered by Carteret in 1767, and named after the midshipman who first sighted it.

For three years all went well, and the little community flourished and throve in amity and peace. But then came six years of continuous tragedy—tragedy none the less grim that it was played on a petty stage, out of sight of a world that was now engrossed in the French Revolution and a European war.

It happened that the Tahitian wife of one of the Englishmen accidentally met her death by a fall over a cliff; and the widower took to himself by force the wife of a Tahitian.

The sin brought its own immediate punishment in this primitive drama of lust and hate. The Tahitians conspired against the English and threatened to kill them; and the Tahitian wives of the other white men betrayed the plot to their husbands.

Remonstrance was made with the adulterer, but to no purpose. He refused to restore the woman to her husband. And being a good workman, his services were so valuable to the community that he was left unpunished.

But from that day peace vanished from the island. The guilty man lived on; but his sin recoiled upon the innocent. Fletcher Christian was shot in a brawl, thus paying the penalty of his weakness in dealing with the offender; and four of the other white men were also killed.

Among these four was the adulterer; but his sin had not yet purged itself upon his fellows. Four Englishmen only remained; and these, fearful lest they also should be destroyed, decided to kill all the Tahitian men. The work was done without difficulty; but the Tahitian women, horrified at the murder of their countrymen, determined to escape from the terrible isle.

A leaking boat stopped the wild design at the outset; and the women then plotted to murder the four remaining Englishmen. The plot was discovered and frustrated. But the numbers of the whites were now again reduced. One had discovered a means of distilling alcohol from the plants

of the island, and he and a companion were constantly drunk. The one threw himself over the rocks in an attack of delirium tremens; the other lost his reason. In self-defence the two remaining Englishmen were compelled to shoot their mad companion.

At last the evil consequences of the dead adulterer's sin had worked themselves out. The two surviving whites, Edward White and Alexander Smith, were sober, godly men, who devoted themselves to the task of teaching what was left of the little community a better way of life. A Bible and a Prayer Book of the Church of England that had belonged to Fletcher Christian were found, after long neglect, and regularly used. A service of prayer was held every morning and evening, and systematic religious instruction was given to the children of the colony.

It was in the year 1799 that this extraordinary change came over the settlement. Nearly ten years had now elapsed since the mutineers had come to Pitcairn, and no stray vessel had brought them news of the outer world. Truly Christian had led his men to a safe refuge.

A few months later Edward Young fell a victim to asthma; and Alexander Smith—who subsequently changed his name to John Adams, as though to wipe out all trace of the hateful events with which he had once been associated—was now the only one of the original company of mutineers that survived.

But the children of this small community were growing up around him. And the memories of little children are short; the offspring of the mutineers gave no sign in after life of any knowledge of the evil deeds of their fathers. Nor was John Adams unfitted for the work before him. Patiently and thoroughly he taught his pupils from the Bible day by day; and the years that were big with events in the great world where nations and empires were struggling and falling, passed peacefully and slowly on this lonely rock of

the ocean, whose only happenings were the primal necessary things of nature, seedtime and harvest, and birth and mating and death.

At long last, after twenty years of solitude, an American vessel hove in sight of Pitcairn. Communication was established; the extraordinary story of the settlement was told, and forwarded to England, together with the chronometer and compass of the *Bounty* as a proof that it was true. Widespread interest was aroused at home; but the Napoleonic war was at its height, and in the clash of arms in Europe the petty affairs of Pitcairn were forgotten.

A few years later the island was visited by two British frigates. Adams was asked if he wished to return to England; and to the surprise of his hearers—for he would still have been liable to stand his trial for mutiny—he answered in the affirmative. Only the tears and entreaties of his people now dissuaded their leader, and the warships sailed away without him. But one of the crew was so attracted by the character of the colony that he sought, and obtained, permission to settle on Pitcairn. This was the first new blood the colony had received since its founding.

Again, in 1825, the island was visited by Captain Beechey on a voyage of discovery, and full enquiry was made into the condition of its people. Investigation amply proved the value of Adams's work. Beechey found that the little community had now increased to sixty-six persons, who lived as one large family under the care and control of the old mutineer. Their houses were clean and comfortable, their gardens neat and tidy. Their food was simple, being pork or fowls, vegetables and breadfruit. Alcohol was forbidden, and their drink was water, or an infusion of ginger sweetened with sugar. The women still preserved some Tahitian customs—the food was cooked in Tahitian fashion, and children were suckled at the breast for two or three years, after the fashion common among the Pacific Islanders—but

the children spoke excellent English, and could read and write intelligently.

The morals of the community were above reproach. The sin whose consequences had nearly destroyed the original settlement was unknown; the people were obedient to the instructions of Adams, and religious observances were frequent and regular. On Sundays no work whatever was permitted, even the necessary food being cooked the day before; the whole Sabbath was occupied in public worship, no fewer than five services being held by Adams and attended by all.

Every one seemed happy and contented. The lives of the Pitcairn Islanders were passed in conditions of idyllic peace; they had known no larger stage on which to play the round of life, and they needed none.

Not long afterwards, on 29th March 1829, the well-beloved head of the community ended his strange eventful life. He was sixty-five years of age when he died, and his last moments were cheered and comforted by the tender care of the people he had led from anarchy to peace.

The strange chances of human life, which fated this son of a poor London boatman to save and establish a little community in the southern seas, had given the mutineer-pastor, John Adams, a place in history as sure, albeit on a far less conspicuous plane, as that held by George Washington. In each case a man, seemingly of ordinary and even commonplace calibre, who would otherwise have been unknown beyond the small immediate circle of his intimates, was forced by unsought and unforeseen circumstances into a position which he alone of all his fellows was competent to fill; and his mastery of those circumstances sufficed for that remembrance when the work was done which we poor mortals call immortality.

When the grief of the people had somewhat abated, another pastor was chosen, and the petty happy round of life con-

tinued as of old. Again the years passed; but as they passed a silent subtle change was seen. The population outgrew the narrow resources of Pitcairn, and the British Government, which felt a moral responsibility for this strange settlement in the wilderness of waters, persuaded the people to remove in 1856 to the larger Norfolk Island. But the experiment was not altogether successful. The descendants of the mutineers left their little rock unwillingly, and recalled its memory with regret; they disliked their new abode, which, they said, was not their own, as Pitcairn had been; and after two or three years, many of them returned to the lonely rock which they had never ceased to call their home.

Once more the peaceful monotonous round of life began. But again there were subtle and at first unnoticed changes in this small community, the minute yet unceasing action of circumstance and environment on a people whose circumstance and environment was never changed by travel or new blood. They remained indeed happy and contented; but their peace was a stagnant vacant peace.

The population now rapidly increased; in thirty-four years the people had trebled, despite an epidemic which varied their usual good health in 1893.¹ There was no room for this expansion on the island, yet none would leave its narrow shores. Over-population and in-breeding resulted, and in time a general deterioration of moral and intellectual fibre was observed by the casual visitor; it was stated that the people did nothing and read nothing all day, that they refused books when these were offered them, and that the children no longer spoke good English, but a clipped and stunted dialect which it was difficult for the outsider to

¹ The epidemic was ascribed, probably with justice, to the visit of a trading vessel shortly before. Similar outbreaks from a similar cause are mentioned later in this chapter as occurring all over the islands of the Pacific Ocean. I have read somewhere that the people who inhabit the isle of St. Kilda, off Scotland, ascribe any sickness that visits them to infection brought by travellers from the mainland.

understand. Their restricted interests, sharpened by no exterior stress or friction, had continually contracted on themselves to their own harm.

The houses and gardens were now untidy and uncared for. Mutual love no longer prevailed; a feud between the two principal families divided the island into rival camps, but even the feud was sullen and languid. Crime, too, was no longer unknown, and two murders were committed within eighteen months.

There were more women than men among the new generation in Pitcairn, and to this may perhaps be ascribed part of the degeneration of morality.¹ Several illegitimate children had been born; and this occurrence, which would have horrified the pious soul of good John Adams, was not excused or explained by the fact that the people had recently abandoned the teaching of the Church of England for the tenets of the Seventh Day Adventists,² or by the recent political revolution which had given them a constitution.

There was now a parliament of seven members on Pitcairn, elected by every man and woman—for female suffrage obtained one of its earliest victories on that island—over twenty-one years of age. The existence of a parliament in so small a community is probably a sign that the Pitcairn Islanders had been unable to breed a man of sufficient natural authority to rule as Adams had ruled, and much of the slackness which was observed among the people may certainly be ascribed to the gradual extinction of the gentle but effectual authority which he had exercised.

A generation previously the island might have furnished a

¹ I speak with hesitation on this difficult question, and indeed any attempt to construct a general theory on a problem which may be affected by climate, local considerations, fashions, and individual example would be absurd. But it seems probable that the more equal the distribution of the sexes, the better will sexual morality be.

² The Adventists are Christian sects which look for the speedy second coming of the Messiah. The Seventh Day Adventists hold their Sabbath on the Saturday, after the Jewish fashion.

practical illustration of Utopia for the political philosopher, an idyllic picture of Christian peace and goodwill to the religious. But it was now no more than a sorry and depressing example of divergence through separation from the parent stock, of deterioration through lack of mental interests, of intellectual apathy leading rapidly towards atrophy. The isolation of the people of Pitcairn from the struggles and temptations which beset other human beings on the wider stage of life had not evolved a higher type, of men superior to the rivalries and jealousies of their fellows ; it had produced instead a physically and mentally inferior tribe, divided into two factions, incapable of advance on its own small territory, and equally incapable of holding its own elsewhere, or even of the desire to go elsewhere.¹

But while these subtle changes were slowly affecting the uneventful lives of the Pitcairn Islanders in their remote settlement, other and far stranger changes had been occurring around them in the Pacific. When their fathers had mutinied on the *Bounty* a century before, the white man had been a rare and curious visitor to the South Seas. But since then all was altered. White traders and missionaries had come and conquered the old inhabitants of a thousand isles ; European warships had charted the unknown seas, sailing vessels and steamers now made their way to every corner of the ocean, and the great powers of the world had begun to covet and control the beautiful fertile lands whose very existence had been unknown until near the close of the eighteenth century.

The trader brought a visible hell, the evangelist promised

¹ I make no excuse for giving the trivial annals of Pitcairn Island thus fully. From its petty history the philosopher of another planet could reconstruct the whole of human society ; and our own undoubted sages, who are sometimes inclined to overlook the part which environment plays in the world, may realise from the lives of those who could not escape from their environment how great a factor it may become. Its effects are less on a larger scene ; but for the ruck of humanity they exist nevertheless.

an invisible heaven ; but both brought danger and death to the aboriginal islanders of the Pacific. And whether the white man came on the errand of God or Mammon, **They spread Disease.** whether he sought to save or destroy, unconsciously he carried the seeds of his own diseases, and the people he visited had not the power of resistance which he had acquired in long generations of suffering and elimination of the susceptible.¹ Practically every visit which every European made to any of the Pacific Isles was followed by the outbreak of an epidemic, although the white man himself might not be aware that he carried the germ of a single malady upon his person or the vessel in which he came.

Tuberculosis, smallpox, syphilis, influenza, measles, dysentery, meningitis, and whooping-cough ravaged the islands ; and in almost every case when careful enquiry was made it was found that the aborigines had diminished since the coming of the white.²

It is believed indeed that the aboriginal people of the Pacific Isles had already begun to decline before the white man came among them.³ The lack of a stable social or political organisation caused continual wars between rival chiefs and islands, which did much to thin the numbers of the tribes. **Decrease of Aboriginal Population.** The inbreeding of a small population may have done harm in some islands ; but

¹ I must leave the question to medical men—if they can answer it—why European civilisation and diseases should have been so fatal to the aborigines in North America, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, and Australia ; whereas in Asia and Africa, on the contrary, the natives have apparently increased more rapidly since the advent of Europeans than before. In every case medical science, missionary teaching, and the ban on tribal war have been the same ; but while it has assisted the natural increase of population in the Old World, it has availed nothing in the New. There is no obvious reason why the African negro should have a greater resisting power against disease than the American redskin.

² One exception was the Solomon Islands (*Statistical Report*, Sydney, 1909).

It was sometimes suggested that infection was carried from one island to another by the trade-winds and not by human agency.

³ Ellis's *Polynesian Researches*.

since in most cases there was frequent communication with other islands, and a fairly regular importation of fresh blood, this can hardly have been more than a limited source of damage. It is disputed whether the open, and in some cases disgusting, licentiousness of the people reduced their vitality; but it is certain that, although the birth-rate was high, the horrible practice of infanticide, which was extremely prevalent, more than counteracted the exuberant fertility of the native women.

There were cases in which women converts confessed to the missionaries that they had killed five or seven or even nine of their infants; one terrible instance has been recorded in which the seventeen children of one mother had all been done to death at the moment of their birth. Sometimes the child was strangled, sometimes its throat was pinched until it died; a more barbarous method—if there are degrees in this kind of inhuman savagery—was to break the bones of the new-born child one by one until the wretched infant perished.

In most of the islands the child was either destroyed immediately after birth—its destruction having been predetermined by the parents—or suffered to live; but in the Sandwich Islands it might be destroyed by its creators at any time during the first year of its existence. And frequently the child was not born at all, for the aborigines were artists in abortion; but in these cases outraged nature sometimes revenged itself upon the unnatural mother. . . .

How greatly the population diminished through infanticide may be judged from the fact that one evangelist of long experience, who was a competent and careful observer by no means given to exaggeration, gave it as his deliberate opinion that two-thirds of all the native children born in the South Seas were murdered by their parents.¹ No birth-rate, however high, could survive that awful drain upon it; above

¹ Ellis's *Polynesian Researches*.

all when, as was the case here, it was the female children in particular who were liable to be destroyed. There were islands where the proportion of men to women was as five to one ; yet in these islands polygamy prevailed.

As to the origins of this widespread system of murder there might be differences of opinion,¹ but of the facts there could be no doubt whatever. The causes existed before the white man came, and they persisted after his coming.

But if the population was falling before the European invasion of the Pacific, its diminution afterwards was rapid and fearful. On one island of the Marquesas it dropped from many thousands to eighty in thirty-four years. An epidemic of smallpox and tuberculosis reduced a tribe of four hundred persons to two. In the Gilbert Islands it shrank steadily from disease.² In the Fiji Islands an epidemic of measles broke out in 1875, shortly after a British vessel had visited that archipelago ; and within less than a year forty thousand of its inhabitants had perished from a disease that is usually regarded as one of the less serious maladies of childhood in Europe. On almost every island the aboriginal population was dying out before the white invader.

This terrible destruction of native life was regarded by some white men with equanimity, and, if we are to believe the evidence of an honest but prejudiced witness, even with rejoicing ;³ but there were others, earnest and warm-

¹ Possibly it was originally due to over-population, which, on the small spaces of the Pacific Islands, soon became a pressing question, as at Pitcairn. It was also a recognised social usage, and the wife of inferior station who had married a chief was considered to have raised herself to his rank when she had borne and killed several children.

² Colonial Office Reports: *Visits to Gilbert and Ellice Is.*, 1909-10.

³ Paton in his *Autobiography* has an anecdote of a white trader who landed men whom he knew to be suffering from measles on an island, in order that the natives might take the infection and so die. He said to Paton, 'Sweep these creatures away, and let the white men occupy the soil.' Precisely the same doctrine was held in Queensland ; see bk. xviii. ch. iii.

hearted Christians in Britain, to whom the thought that whole tribes and races of mankind were perishing without

**The Spread
of Chris-
tianity.**

the gospel of eternal salvation caused unutterable distress; and by these men, who had not forgotten the command of Christ to spread the Gospel among all peoples, an effort was made to evangelise the South Seas while there was yet time.¹

The years that followed the exploration of the Pacific Ocean were, indeed, a time of great missionary zeal in England. An heroic effort was made to convert the negroes, both in West Africa itself and in the West Indian plantations; ² others were kindled with the desire to evangelise the aborigines of South Africa,³ and the peoples of India and Malaya; ⁴ and in this fervour the South Sea Islands were not forgotten.⁵

The first party of twenty-five Protestant missionaries was

¹ The same causes had the same effects in Spain nearly three centuries before; vol. i. bk. i. ch. ii.

² See vol. iv. bks. xii-xiv.

³ See vol. vi. bk. xxiv. ch. ii., and bk. xxv.

⁴ See vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. ii. for Malaya. The first English missionaries arrived in India early in the nineteenth century, when Lord Minto was Governor-General.

⁵ There is a very large literature of missionary effort in the South Seas. Much of it is very valuable, both in an historical and ethnological sense; some is beautiful and even inspiring as the record of heroic struggles against difficulties; but part is puerile and superstitious, or narrow and bigoted; and—in my opinion, at least, after struggling through most of the many volumes—it is always far too long. Among the leading works may be mentioned: Ellis's *Polynesian Researches*, a valuable and moderately expressed examination of the condition of the South Seas; John Williams's *Narrative of Missionary Enterprise*, the straightforward autobiography of an honest man; Calvert's *Fiji and the Fijians*, a good book spoilt by a bad editor; G. S. Rowe's *James Calvert of Fiji* and Lawrie's *Two Missionary Visits to the Friendly and Feejee Islands*, both examples of the worst style of mission literature; Lovett's *James Chalmers*, good; Prout's *Life of Williams* and Hutton's *Missionary Life in the South Seas*, futile compilations; Steele's *New Hebrides and Christian Missions*, not very stupid; Turner's *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, Hunt's *Memoirs of the Rev. W. Cross*, and Ellis's *History of the London Missionary Society*, good; Robertson's *Erromanga the Martyr Isle* and Murray's *The Martyrs of Polynesia*, moderate; the *Life of Selwyn*, Young's *Life of Patteson*, Selwyn's *Letters on the Melanesian Mission* and George Brown, an *Autobiography*, all excellent; John G. Paton, by his brother, and Paton's *Autobiography*, full of incidents but prejudiced and bigoted.

sent out to the Pacific Ocean in the year 1797 by the London Missionary Society, a body whose fundamental principle it was that each evangelist should plant the form of Church government he thought most suited to the soil in which he worked. These pioneers of the faith established themselves in Tahiti, the Marquesas, and the Friendly Islands, learning the languages, and living as far as possible among the people whom they wished to convert ; but for some years there was no result of all their labours.

At last they were compelled to leave Tahiti without having made a single convert, but hardly had they gone when they were recalled. The native chief of that island now promised to embrace Christianity ; the forced conversion of his people followed, after a war in which the followers of the old religion were overthrown ; and thus unexpectedly the first real victory of Christianity was won in the Pacific.

Other mission stations followed in quick succession. In 1826 a Wesleyan Mission was opened in the Friendly Isles ; and the Tongan converts of that archipelago soon carried the news of the new religion, which they embraced with ardour, to the then little known islands of Fiji. Bishop Selwyn, the able and energetic head of the Church of England in New Zealand, had hardly arrived in the antipodes before he set about spreading the work of evangelisation, and in 1849 the Melanesian Mission was begun under his direction. The Catholics, ever to the fore in the spreading of the Gospel, had already begun work in the Solomon Islands, and both here and elsewhere they carried the banner of Christ to some of the most lonely and savage resorts of man in the Pacific.¹

The work was seldom easy, and nearly always dangerous—for the people of the Pacific were as fickle as children—but

¹ The official *Handbook of the Solomon Isles Protectorate* (1911) contains an account of the Catholic mission of St. Mary and its martyrs on those islands.

these pioneers of the faith comforted themselves with the thought that St. Paul, the great pioneer of Christianity, had passed through perils not less grave. And there were martyrs, too, in the Pacific—men who watered the creed they had helped to plant with their blood: such were John Williams, clubbed to death in the surf off Erromanga; the two Gordons, husband and wife, whose blood marked the spot on the rocks where they fell for many a year; a Catholic bishop and three priests on the Solomon Isles; and several others, martyrs in will if not in deed, who were stricken down by fever or dysentery as they worked on alone among strange scenes and an alien people.

Often, indeed, the way was hard and the soil stubborn, 'a sowing time of tears,' as one confessed in sorrow when all persuasion seemed in vain; but few lost courage or abandoned the task before them. And sometimes an omen would convince where preaching or prayer had failed. For many and various were the chances that moved these fickle islanders. At one place a sickness broke out after the teaching of the white man had been rejected—it was ascribed to the anger of the white man's god, and all at once believed. At another time an epidemic of dysentery was laid at the door of the missionary when success seemed in sight, and he had to flee for his life.¹ Once when the people were perverse, 'a hurricane taught them righteousness,' through fear, wrote the simple-minded man who pointed the way of the Cross, nothing doubting that God had worked a miracle to aid His servant; indeed, many times 'the divine agency was too conspicuous to escape attention' in thus leading men on the path to salvation. Such was the faith that can move mountains, and in truth it moved many in these years.

But if God was at work with His people, as the missionaries

¹ It was a prevalent belief among the natives that all sickness was due to an enemy, and that therefore that enemy must be sought out and killed. The fact that an epidemic usually followed the arrival of a stranger shows how the belief arose; the remedy was natural.

held, the forces of evil were also busy. The backsliders from the faith were many, and they were chiefly among the young; too often they returned to their own gods, and restored the idols which they had never truly banished from their hearts.

Yet sometimes the way was easy, and a whole island would be converted in a day, the people exclaiming, 'Surely this is the truth; our religion was all deceit'; or, as at Rurutu, 'The glory of our gods is as birds' feathers, soon rotten; but your God is the same for ever.' At such times the enthusiastic proselytes would hasten to build a church, and even their spears would be turned into balustrades to form a pulpit; they would apply themselves to read the Christian scriptures in their own tongue, and entreat the privilege of becoming missionaries to others—a favour that was only granted after long training and examination by the white evangelists.¹

But it was only the smaller islets that so readily abandoned their belief in pagan gods; in none of the important islands was Christianity introduced without a war, in which the newly made Christian would fight with heathen brother for the triumph of the faith. Mission narratives declare that in these conflicts the pagans were always the aggressors; but even if that rather doubtful assertion were universally true, it would still remain the fact that the original cause of the strife lay with Christianity as the invading creed.

But even within the sacred limits of the Christian faith unhappy conflicts arose among its divided preachers and converts that caused grave scandal and distress. The miserable strifes and jealousies which divided the Protestant sects of Europe were perpetuated in the South Seas, as one denomination after another quarrelled over its share in the spoil of souls; and the narrowness and

Divisions
among
them.

¹ Ellis remarks (*Polynesian Researches*) that there were few sudden conversions. But the facts are against him.

bigotry which it was still Britain's pride to exhibit in religious matters was not forgotten when Protestant missionaries in the Pacific encountered their comrades of the Catholic Church. In some cases, indeed, the friction between rival Protestant sects was composed by an agreement for each to restrict its energies to a certain sphere. Where the field was so vast a friendly accommodation of this kind should never have been difficult. But between Protestant and Catholic missionary was undying hate, and the simple natives who were enjoined to embrace the religion of truth and love may well have wondered which was the truth and where the love, when each denounced the other in turn as an impostor. One Protestant propagandist, John G. Paton, was not ashamed to suggest a parallel between the Catholic Church and the rites of the heathen deities.¹ The Wesleyan missionaries were found denouncing the Catholics as men who were obliged to flee their own country ;² and in Fiji there was a well-understood distinction between Catholicism, 'the pope's religion,' and Wesleyanism, 'the oily religion.'³

When such divisions prevailed among the white teachers, the native pupils who had so recently been saved from the discomforts of eternal damnation need not be severely blamed if they showed less of charity than zeal in their dealings with other converts of a different brand, and sometimes used their ancient weapons in the propagation of the new faith. An open war that raged between rival sects in the Friendly Islands called for the intervention of the British civil power ;⁴ nor were such incidents unprecedented in the history of the conversion of the Pacific Islanders to Christianity.

¹ Paton's *Autobiography*.

² Erskine's *Journal of a Cruise in the West Pacific*.

³ Britton's *Fiji* in 1870. The oil was a tribute which the Wesleyan converts had to pay for the support of their missionary.

⁴ Colonial Office Report: *On the Recent Disturbances in the Affairs of Tonga*, 1887. There were no fewer than five separate denominations of Christians on the island.

But in the end, and despite their mutual disagreements, the Christian missions conquered the pagan creeds. And they not only conquered but ruled the people, with a discipline stern and strict and sometimes harsh, a discipline which indeed purified the old savage life of the Pacific of many of its grossest features, but which also interdicted song and dance and much of the light of life and love. If the horrid rites of brutal gods were henceforth banished, the beautiful legends that had passed from isle to isle through the length and breadth of the broad ocean were also now tabu,¹ and in their place were introduced the Shorter Catechism,² the grim God and dour defini-

Their
Eventual
Victory.

¹ The dances and songs of the Pacific Islanders were condemned as indecent, which they probably were; although perhaps hardly more so than some that excite applause on the European stage.

But the earlier missionaries seem to have known nothing of the legends of the islands, which they roundly condemned as heathen. What else did they expect? But these legends were often beautiful; some are mentioned in bk. xxi. ch. iii.; one may be cited here.

A Tongan story tells that once a maiden was so beautiful that her father kept her secluded from the gaze of men. But the sun in the heavens, which sees everything on earth, saw her and loved her as she lay one day on the beach after bathing in the sea. And, seeing him and loving him in return, the maiden conceived, and in due time gave birth to a child by the sun, and this child was called a sun-child. Now other children mocked at him, for that he had no father; but his mother comforted him, saying that his father was the sun. And behold, the child went to see and to speak with his father on the ocean out of which he saw him rise every morning. But the sun heard him not when he shouted, and sank out of sight; so the lad said, 'I will go back and wait for my father when he climbs again out of the sea.' And this time the sun saw his child, and came and talked with him behind a cloud. And that day the people said that the sun delayed his journey across the sky, because he stopped to talk with the lad. But he gave his child of the earth a message to his sister the moon, and the lad waited for her, and talked with her that night. But her he disobeyed, for she was only a woman; and disobeying her he died.

For my part, I would exchange a good many volumes of missionary memoirs and sermons for another prose poem like that. But poetry is inherent in the Pacific, and some modern Englishmen who have travelled in that ocean have caught something of its charm, as is evidenced by that enchanting romance, *The Blue Lagoon*, in which my friend, H. de Vere Stacpoole, has added a pure gem to the literature, not of England only, but of the world.

² 'I have gone carefully through the translation of the Shorter Catechism into Aniwan.'—Paton.

tions of Scots theology, the complicated ceremonial law of ancient Jewry,¹ and the hymns and tracts of modern Wesleyanism.

The strict observance of the Sabbath, that Puritan fetich which has sat so heavily on modern England, was trans-
strict- planted to the Pacific ; and one of the first cares
ness of of the missionaries was to insist that the Christian
Missionary Rule. Sunday should be as drear and dismal in the South Seas as in Scotland. In Hawaii, said one evangelist, ' the Sabbath was spent in a manner truly gratifying. No athletic sports were seen, no noise of playful children, shouting as they gambolled in the surf, no persons carrying canoes. . . . (Such was) the dawn of a bright Sabbath Day.' ²

As the power of the missionaries grew among the native Christians, penalties were imposed for any infringement of the strict round of Sabbath duties ; a spell of work at road-making was exacted as a penance from the unruly who could not attune their joyous vitality to the decorous dullness of the day of rest ; ³ and in one scandalous case, where a Christian missionary had drawn up an entirely new code of laws for a tribe which he had converted, severe punishment was imposed upon the Sabbath-breaker, but no penalty whatever was provided for murder.⁴

With each conversion the power of the missionaries grew among a docile if fickle people ; and although they professed themselves unwilling to interfere in native politics, they were seldom able to refrain for long from making fundamental changes in the barbaric government of the Pacific Isles, nor

¹ Erskine (*Journal of a Cruise*) found the books of Leviticus and Numbers translated into the native tongue in Samoa.

² Ellis's *Polynesian Researches*. Ellis states that the strictness of Sabbath observance was desired by the people themselves. After the missionaries had dwelt sufficiently upon the importance they attached to it, perhaps.

³ Ellis's *Polynesian Researches*.

⁴ Williams's *Narrative*. Williams was himself the author of the code. He was afterwards murdered. Could he have foreseen the future he might have been a better lawyer but a less willing missionary.

do they seem in fact to have been very unwilling to introduce a new earth as well as a new heaven among their followers.

In part, it is true, this intervention was inevitable, for Christianity cut right across the aboriginal conception of society. Against infanticide every evangelist was bound to protest. Cannibalism had also to be sternly stamped out. And it was likewise decided that polygamy could not be recognised among converts, and that every candidate for baptism must content himself with one wife. Slavery, to judge by the past practice of the Christian churches, was a more open question; but the evangelical school to which most of the Protestant missionaries belonged had always been inspired by the example of William Wilberforce, and was therefore committed to emancipation wherever its influence prevailed.

Against each of these practices, all common in the South Seas, the missionaries protested; and not in vain. Infanticide and cannibalism were suppressed, at least to outward appearance, with little difficulty;¹ but polygamy, a far more deeply rooted social custom than either, needed more persuasion, and there were often distressing scenes when the numerous wives of an important man were publicly repudiated by their owner.

The old heathen creed of the Pacific Islands was a political as well as a religious system, and in smashing the one the missionaries smashed the other. The authority of the chiefs vanished with the power of the native priests and the destruction of the native idols; a social revolution confronted

¹ Perhaps the missionaries were not always so successful as they hoped and believed. A naval officer, whose name I forbear to mention, tells me that he and some of his shipmates were sumptuously entertained a few years ago at a feast by the chief of one of the Pacific Isles. 'Ah,' said the native potentate to his guests after the feast was ended, 'you white men object to eating your fellows. But the roast pork which you have just enjoyed was the flesh of a native baby.' The disgusted sailors bombarded the place as a return for this excessive hospitality.

the people and their evangelists ; and the white man naturally assumed the vacant leadership.¹

That the missionaries made full use of their power is testified by many impartial observers, and by the admissions of the missionaries themselves. A secular witness declares that in Tahiti the missionaries were supreme until the coming of the French, and that on another island nobody was allowed abroad after eight in the evening.² A white stranger who unwittingly transgressed the rule was arrested and taken before the resident evangelist for judgment. In the Sandwich Islands the government was a pure theocracy, in the hands of missionaries from New England, who were unconsciously preparing the way for the future annexation by the United States. In many islands, too, the missionaries insisted on the converts contributing towards their upkeep ; and while native arts and crafts were decaying,³ the missionaries taught their charges something of the cultivation of the soil, of the use of money, and of the commerce of civilisation.⁴ The introduction of sugar, coffee, cotton, and arrowroot, and tobacco plantations was essayed, and not without success ; the products were sold to passing traders, and part at least of the proceeds was devoted to extending the work of the mission and the support of the missionary.

The missionaries were often criticised for the severity of their rule, and indeed it had many vulnerable points. They were usually men of obscure and humble origin, of poor education, whose most valuable qualities were zeal and strength of purpose. In general they had but a limited

¹ It is not altogether irrelevant to remark that a great number of the missionaries were Scots—a race which seldom fails to dominate a weaker people, whether in England or elsewhere.

² Lamont's *Wild Life among the Pacific Islanders*. The agents of the London Missionary Society had begun to introduce the same discipline in Madagascar, but here also they were ousted by the French. Vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv.

³ Colonial Office Reports : *Of Visits to Gilbert Islands*, 1909-10.

⁴ Ellis's *Polynesian Researches* ; Williams's *Narrative*.

range of ideas, and no appreciation whatever of the good points of the old native system, which they condemned as mere savage cannibalism and brutality, and which it was their constant errand to destroy entirely.¹ Indeed, they saw only the evil and debasing side of native customs, and they made the same efforts as their colleagues in West Africa ² to establish, among an alien people, the entirely European standard by which alone they judged civilisation, since it was the only standard they knew.

The complete convert was marked by the wearing of European clothes as well as by his acceptance of the faith of Jesus, and the promise of paradise in the next world was almost conditional on the assumption of a sufficiency of garments in this. The male converts of the Pacific Islands were taught to cut their hair short after the European fashion, in order to distinguish themselves from the unregenerate; trousers were proclaimed to be as essentially necessary to eternal welfare as a belief in the doctrine of justification by faith, despite the fact that many generations of pious Christians had dispensed with both. And the female converts were induced to veil or perhaps enhance their charms by the wearing of skirts and bonnets;³ a matter in which they readily copied and even surpassed the wives of the missionaries themselves.

These peculiarities brought some ridicule upon the missionaries in the Pacific, but in other greater matters

¹ This contempt for foreign institutions, which is never far from the surface in the ordinary Briton, was not confined to the missionaries as regards barbaric customs. The grave and sober Hallam, in one of his histories, declares that he considers the annals of savages unworthy of his pen. The savage might have retorted that, to judge by his writings, Hallam was too indigestible to be worthy of the cannibal cooking-pot.

² Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. i.

³ The good Williams in particular bestowed bonnets on the astonished ladies of every island where he preached. He appears to have attached almost as much importance to the adornment of the head as to the conversion of the heart.

they could hardly help themselves. When the old authority of the native chiefs broke down before the new religion, some new authority was necessary to preserve order; and that authority could only be provided by the missionaries, the originators of the new order.

But whatever the faults of the missionaries might be, they shone in comparison with many of the other white visitors to the Pacific Ocean. For these were lawless and bloody years of force and crime in the South Seas, years in which evil deeds of violence and treachery and uncleanness were rampant. There were runaway convicts from Australia, who sometimes claimed to be messengers of the Gospel of Christ, and even administered a blasphemous travesty of the sacraments of the Church to the deluded people of the Pacific Isles; and there were white traders who by common consent brought disgrace not only on their own names and on that of Europe, but on humanity at large.

Most of these traders were British; for since the revolt of her South American colonies Spain, in the early nineteenth century, had lost her old position in the southern seas. And French travellers were seldom seen so far afield on trading errands, albeit from time to time French scientists and missionaries passed round Cape Horn to one or other isle of the Pacific; but the practical monopoly of the ocean commerce was in the hands of British and Yankee skippers.

Some of the white traders were certainly honest and fair in their dealings; such were Captain Paddon, who did business with the islanders for many years, and in time built up a reputation for never cheating or ill-treating his savage clients, and thus came and went among them in perfect security.¹ And there were other traders whose name was as good in the Pacific Ocean, and who resisted all temptations to rob or bully those with whom they trafficked. To

¹ Armstrong's *Melanesian Mission*.

such men, whose sterling character was proof against the evil customs of their baser rivals, all honour is due.

But these were unhappily a minority ; by far the greater number were bold and reckless and brutal men, the very dregs and ullage of civilisation, who hardly looked upon the people with whom they traded as human beings, and were ready to commit any outrage and any injustice to get a profitable cargo. Engaged in ' a precarious and almost piratical trade, carried on in small vessels, principally from Sydney, in sandalwood, trepang, tortoise-shell, and cocoa-nut oil,'¹ their profits were often as great as their work was usually dangerous ; for sandalwood, the most valuable product which they purchased from the islanders, was worth £30 to £50 a ton ;² and one man, whose case was not exceptional, admitted that he had made over £70,000 out of that traffic alone in a few years.

Their method of trading was ultimately costly, for the forests of sandalwood were seriously diminished, and sometimes exhausted by their rapacity and the carelessness of the islanders, who were at first quite ignorant of the value of the article which the white traders sought and bought with such urgency. But the cost fell not upon the original traders, and it was the brutality with which the traffic was carried on, rather than the lack of foresight of those engaged in it, which made the exploiters of the South Seas notorious for evil.

Most of the terrible deeds of treachery and bloodshed which stained the Pacific Ocean red during the nineteenth century have indeed been forgotten ; but the shameful memory of some survives to prove that the European could be as savage as those whom he condemned as barbarians. The mate of one vessel that came from Sydney boasted that he had shot six islanders without provocation, in order to spoil the market for any future

**Their
Profits.**

**Their
Brutal
Methods.**

¹ Erskine's *Cruise*.

² Robertson's *Erromanga*.

trader.¹ Another is known to have incited neighbouring tribes to war, in order that there should be a greater demand for the weapons and gunpowder he had on board at a higher price than offered in time of peace.² Sometimes, too, the traders who had secured a full cargo of sandalwood refused to pay the natives for the collection and transport of the goods; occasionally, on a pretext that they had been defrauded or even without any pretext at all, they would kidnap a native chief, and either sell him into slavery, or, from pure wanton cruelty, land him on another island, perhaps among his enemies, where certain death awaited him.³ And it was notorious that they kidnapped any of the native women whose beauty attracted them;⁴ and however loose the morals of the islanders may have been, they may well have resented the theft of wife or daughter by strangers who had already cheated them, and perhaps murdered some of their comrades without provocation.

So notorious were the evils of the traffic that they compelled the attention of the British Government, and in 1817 an Act of Parliament was passed to deal with murders in the South Sea Islands. But Parliament had no authority in the Pacific Ocean, and the lawless British traders of the day must have laughed at an Act—if indeed they ever heard of it—which it was quite impossible to enforce. The only justice which they had to fear was the rough justice of the enraged natives, who took an indiscriminate revenge when and where they could. And it is hardly surprising that the islanders often retaliated on their tormentors. Occasionally an innocent white crew was lured ashore, deceived by friendly professions into false security, and then massacred; at times the natives would dive under the ship's launch when it pulled

¹ Erskine's *Cruise*.

² Paton's *Autobiography*.

³ Robertson's *Erromanga*.

⁴ Similar outrages occurred in New Zealand; see bk. xxi. ch. i.

inshore to trade, overturn the boat, and kill its occupants as they struggled surprised and helpless in the water.¹

Traders as well as missionaries were subject to unprovoked attack from time to time, sometimes an act of vicarious revenge, in which the innocent suffered for the guilty ; and it is recorded that the white traders and the islanders often distrusted each other so much that, even when chaffering for bargains, every gun was loaded ready to fire and every spear poised ready to hurl on either side, the while articles for barter were exchanged by means of long poles stretched out from European ship to native canoe.²

But the evil deeds of the traffickers in sandalwood and pearls and oil paled before the methods of those who trafficked in men. From time to time in the earlier years of British traders in the Pacific, when whaling captains were running south into the Antarctic or putting in at Galapagos,³ and tramp traders from Sydney running cargoes of produce from the New Hebrides to Australian ports, a Pacific Islander would be kidnapped, transported to New South Wales or Queensland, and sold there for the best price he would fetch. Labour was scarce, and white labour was dear, in Australia ; and in one port or another—for sometimes it was necessary to carry the wretched captive from port to port to obtain a sufficient price for his purchase—the rascally captain was fairly certain to obtain a remunerative return for the human cargo he had stolen. Thus began the trade in Kanakas, as the natives of the Pacific Islands were commonly called in Australia.⁴

It is true that slavery and the slave trade had been

¹ Robertson's *Erromanga*.

² Britton's *Fiji* in 1870.

³ Galapagos was a great centre for British and American whalers. It once accommodated a more distinguished visitor, Charles Darwin, for a short time.

⁴ The word kanaka is the equivalent for 'man' among the natives of the Pacific. It was adopted by the traders and later by the planters.

prohibited throughout the British Empire.¹ But wherever the strong can oppress the weak, there the silent spectre of slavery casts its sorrowful shadow over the horizon of liberty; and although slavery was never legally allowed in Australia, something not far removed from the thing itself was commonly practised for several years. There were many colonists, squatters, Queensland planters, magistrates, and justices, to whom cheap labour was everything, and the means by which it was procured of little account.²

In later years, however, conspicuous improvements were made in a traffic which had occasioned no small scandal. In the ordinary process of economic evolution, the individual traders, the 'blackbirders' as they were often expressively called, whose name had stunk in the South Seas, gave way before powerful and well-equipped commercial companies; and these were admittedly far more humane in their dealings.³ And strict regulations were eventually made by the Australian governments regarding the importation of indentured kuli labourers; every Pacific Islander who was engaged was to be provided with a contract, which was to be translated to him; he was to have one hundred and forty-four cubic feet of air on the voyage, to be provided with a pound each of flour and meat daily, with a sufficiency of vegetables, tea, sugar, and tobacco.⁴

Other regulations were introduced as one island after another was annexed by European powers; and although the project of forbidding by international agreement the traffic in arms and ammunition failed,⁵ heavy fines were now

¹ Vol. iv. bk. xiii. ch. iii.

² It was, however, universally allowed that the planters on Fiji, who knew no rule except their own, were far worse than the Australian employers.

³ Robertson's *Erromanga*.

⁴ See the Queensland Polynesian Labourers Act, 1868; and J. L. A. Hope's *In Quest of Coolies* (1872).

⁵ Official Correspondence and Papers, 1887.

imposed on traders detected in that destructive but profitable business.¹

But not even these penalties could check the traffic in arms, which was stated to be larger than ever at the beginning of the twentieth century ;² and they were only partially effective in checking the abuses of the labour traffic. And the better conditions required by law for the kuli traffic were not always carried out ; some scandals still occurred.³ Few of the native labourers, among whom the mortality in Australia was very heavy, ever returned to their homes ;⁴ and when they did return, their knowledge of the white man's vices was a curse to their fellow islanders. The abuses were in fact inherent in the traffic, under whatever regulations it was carried on, and the whole importation of indentured labour from the Pacific Islands was at length prohibited by the new Australian Commonwealth Government after the year 1904.⁵

Between trader and missionary, between commerce and Christianity, was waged a continuous conflict through the greater part of the nineteenth century for authority over the

¹ Solomon Islands Report, 1900.

² Solomon Islands Report, 1902.

³ See the Report of the Royal Commission of 1885 ; and the evidence cited in Yonge's *Life of Patteson* and Paton's *Autobiography* ; also the *Report on Labour Traffic*, 1883, and on *Outrages in the South Sea Islands*, 1873-4, with an earlier *Report on the Deportation of South Sea Islanders*, 1871-2. The missionaries never said anything worse about the traders than the evidence in these reports.

⁴ Solomon Islands, *Statistical Report*, Sydney, 1909. See also Mr. Justice Higinbotham's evidence (*Parliamentary Correspondence*, 1884) that there was a difficulty in returning each labourer to his own island, which might be hard to identify among many hundreds of similar islands ; yet, ' unless he is landed at his own island and village, he is sure to be condemned to slavery if not to death, as well as to forfeiture of his hard-earned store of trade in return for his three years' labour and expatriation. Not unfrequently, and after a vain search for some time, the unfortunates are landed anywhere, and have been seen gesticulating and wild with despair as the boat pulls away leaving them to their fate.'

⁵ Pacific Islands Labourers Act, 1901. In debating the Bill its author, Sir Edmund Barton, remarked that ' the traffic was bad, both for the kanaka and the white ; it was not inaptly described as limited slavery.'

Pacific Islands. Nor did the messengers of Christ always succeed in conquering those of their countrymen whom they dubbed, with some readiness but not without good reason, the messengers of Satan ; for the firearms and the powder, the ardent spirits and the bright clothes which the trader offered were often more attractive to the savage than the Bibles and the bonnets of the man of God. And great as was the authority of the missionaries on some islands of the Pacific, theirs was always a precarious rule, thanks to the fickleness of the natives, and the fact that the missions had little or no physical force to uphold them. The British pirate-trader who armed his boat with cannon ¹ and his crew with gun or cutlass was usually more than a match for any missionary autocrat in the South Seas, if it came to an open fight between them ; and there was as yet no other established rule in the Pacific Ocean.

Some praiseworthy but rather pathetic efforts were certainly made by a few British settlers of the law-abiding kind to institute a stable government on the islands they inhabited. There were some men, respectable planters as well as missionaries, who felt the necessity of substituting order for the anarchy and lawlessness they had too often witnessed : and by these men, who deserve honour for their heroic if forlorn enterprise, strange parodies of civilised governments had been set up here and there ; and that extremely hardy plant, the British Constitution, had been bedded out in various parts of the South Seas by its enthusiastic admirers with more or less success.

The solitary settlement at Pitcairn had its Parliament of seven members. A kind of native Legislature had been established at Tahiti. On the Friendly Islands the full forms

¹ These cannon were sometimes discarded weapons which had been sold second-hand by the British Admiralty. Although out of date in Europe, they were more than sufficient to terrorise the South Seas.

of constitutional government were exercised or imitated by a puppet Premier and a puppet Parliament under a puppet King, set up by British settlers ;¹ in Fiji, too, an attempt had been made to declare the islands an independent kingdom, after they had been refused successively by the United States, Prussia, and Britain.

But in its new abodes, uncomfortably surrounded and almost choked by unsympathetic pirates, hungry cannibals, pious missionaries, and other white settlers who enjoyed playing the autocrat on solitary isles, the glorious British Constitution, which in more fortunate lands has produced such wonderful flowers, seemed strangely out of place. The fertile soil of liberty and the rich manure of party feeling, those essential adjuncts of parliamentary rule, were both lacking in the South Seas, whose simple people were far more intimately concerned with sandalwood and sea-slugs than prerogative and privilege.²

But without the power to enforce and maintain it, the most perfect form of constitutional government is less effective for order than the rude autocracy of a savage king. And now that the old authority of the native chiefs had broken down, while the authority of the missionaries and planters was too precarious and limited to ensure order in the South Seas, it was generally admitted by law-abiding settlers that the

¹ This Legislative Assembly was a judicious blend of Lords and Commons. Half its members were hereditary nobles, who held office subject to good behaviour—an invidious rule whose introduction would be bitterly resented in European legislatures ; the other half were popular representatives elected every three years. Every male who paid taxes and had not been convicted of a crime was entitled to a vote.

² The firm belief of the average Briton in the universal efficacy of the British Constitution is amazing. These strange experiments in the Pacific Ocean may be compared with the constitutions given to Corsica and Sicily, when those two islands were for a brief period British possessions (vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv.), and the statement of an English political writer in the eighteenth century, quoted in vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. i., that the French would welcome a British conquest of their country if it were accompanied by the British Constitution and the Habeas Corpus Act. The average Parisian would probably have thought the Habeas Corpus was a new *apéritif* or a strange *demi-mondaine*.

protection of a strong European power, able to enforce its will on white pirates and native warrior chiefs, was essential to the future security of the Pacific Ocean.

No European nation had yet annexed all or even any of the myriad isles of the south, when it could have had most for the asking, and all for the fighting. And the British Government, obedient to the flowing tide of anti-imperial sentiment in Victorian England,¹ steadily refused every appeal that came from time to time from the Fiji Islands and elsewhere for protection or incorporation within the Empire.² The British colonists in the antipodes implored the mother country to proclaim all the islands around the Australian coast British territory;³ but British statesmen at home, Liberal and Conservative alike, saw no political advantage in the possession of such remote and scattered dependencies.

It is true that British interests were now predominant in and around the Pacific. Most of the traders, missionaries, and planters on the various isles and islets and archipelagoes were British. And Britain possessed Hongkong and Singapore on the Asiatic side of the ocean, British Columbia on the American side, and Australia and New Zealand in the far south; but among all the isles of the ocean that connected these great possessions she had no foot of territory other than Pitcairn.

But events at length forced the unwilling hands of Britain to a forward policy, in the Pacific as in other parts of the world. The scandals caused by British traders in the South Seas had attracted the attention of the British Government so early as 1817, when an attempt was made without success to bring murderers in

Britain
refuses to
annex the
Pacific
Islands.

Her
reluctant
Consent.

¹ See vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.

² An appeal came from Tahiti for British protection as early as 1825. A similar appeal came from Savage Island, but was disregarded for many years.

³ Bk. xix. ch. iii.

those regions to justice. From time to time in later years British naval vessels patrolled and in some sort policed the Pacific Ocean ; but these visits were too rare and irregular to be of much effect. And meanwhile the scandals continued and grew in volume as the trade in Kanaka labour increased.

Definite action was at last taken. In 1872 and 1875 Acts of Parliament were passed to restrain the evil traffic ; in 1874 the Fiji Islands, where that traffic was rampant, were annexed ; and in 1877 an Order in Council created the office of High Commissioner in, over, and for the Western Pacific Islands, who was charged with the protection of the natives and the settlement of disputes among British subjects. It is not without significance that this action was taken at the time when the tide of anti-imperial sentiment in Britain had begun to ebb.

The Fiji Islands, which had been first discovered by Tasman, and which had since been settled by various missionaries and planters from Europe, were now declared a Crown Colony, under a Governor and Executive Council of five official members ; subsequently a Legislative Council was appointed, which from March 1904 consisted of the governor ; ten official nominated members ; six unofficial members, elected by the European residents ; and two native members. These two were nominated by a council of the great chiefs, who chose six nominees, and from these six the governor chose the two whom he thought most suitable to serve.¹

Fiji, 1874.

But the real question that faced the British Government in the South Seas was not so much the Constitution under which its new territories were to be ruled, but the traffic in labour and the produce of the soil.

¹ Sir Everard im Thurn in *Quarterly Review*, January 1912. The ex-governor of Fiji here states that the choice was limited owing to the Fijians not understanding English, and to their being too shy to take part in the debates. The system may be compared with the Maori members of Parliament in New Zealand. (Bk. xxi. ch. iv.)

In the early nineteenth century, when white planters had settled in Fiji alongside the missionaries, each had been a law to himself, importing his own labourers from elsewhere, and often arming them when necessary against the natives of the particular island he occupied.¹ The Fijians themselves were often at war, and endless disorders broke out upon the islands ;² but when the British Government, after long delaying to act upon the request to annex the archipelago, finally hoisted its flag in 1874, the great chief handed over the great club, the symbol of authority, to the first British governor, Sir Arthur Gordon.³ From that time the planters were secure, and Fiji progressed rapidly as a tropical colony, whose products found a ready market in the industrial world. The natives decreased, although an attempt was made to preserve their ancient customs and manner of living ; but the loss was made good by the import of labourers under government control from other islands in the Pacific and even from India. In 1910 the coloured population was 87,390 true Fijians ; 3004 imported Pacific Islanders, and 35,406 indentured kulis from India.

For some years after the annexation of Fiji, the British Government stayed its hand in the Pacific. The High Commissioner whom it had appointed exercised his authority over a large area, but the islands he visited were not proclaimed British territory. In the Friendly or Tonga Islands, for example, which Cook had first visited in 1774, and all whose inhabitants were now professing Christians, the sham constitution and the puppet king continued their independent existence until 1900. But the very fervour of religious belief in this archipelago brought about the intervention of the civil power, as it had among other zealous converts in the earlier history of the faith.

The
Friendly
Isles, 1900.

¹ Britton's *Fiji* in 1870.

² See, for example, *Letters and Notes during the Disturbances in the Highlands, known as the Devil Country, of Viti Levu, Fiji* (anon. 1879).

³ Afterwards Lord Stanmore.

A war broke out between the various denominations, in which the mild tenets of Wesleyanism became rather strangely identified with a forward militant policy; and the tumult was only suppressed when a British Protectorate was proclaimed.

The neighbouring Savage Island,¹ whose inhabitants had been declared by Captain Cook to possess 'the ferocity of wild boars,' and who had for long preferred the flesh of the missionary above his doctrines, was also annexed in the same year, at the request of the people themselves; and another group of equally savage islands had already been proclaimed British territory.

Savage
Island,
1900.

The Solomon Islands had first been discovered by a Spanish explorer, and to him they owe their name, which was intended to indicate their wealth to his countrymen. But attempts to colonise them ended in failure, and from that time the fact of their existence was as far as possible suppressed by the authorities of Madrid. The early English explorers in the Pacific sought for them in vain; and when the group was at length discovered, the opposition of the inhabitants, who were sturdy and well-armed,² succeeded in keeping Europeans at a distance. Even in 1909, sixteen years after they had been annexed by Britain, their total white population was only two hundred and fifty-one, and life could not be said to be secure, while the climate was by no means healthy.

The
Solomon
Isles, 1893.

Other islands in the Pacific were likewise annexed, or proclaimed to be under British protection, from time to time.

¹ The best account of Savage Island has been written by Basil Thomson, whose description of *The Fijians* may also be regarded as a standard work.

² Some specimens of their arms, which were recently presented to the Royal Colonial Institute, are terrific weapons of offence. The mere sight of them exhibited on the stairs made most of the members of the Institute turn pale and tremble. But the intrepid librarian handled them fearlessly, at least until an ill-advised and, I believe, entirely unfounded suggestion that the weapons might be poisoned led him to the instant study of anti-toxins.

Among these may be mentioned the Gilbert and Ellice group, whose poorly paid uneducated native officials were **Smaller** stated to perform their duties with admirable **British** honesty¹—a testimony to the fact that the **Islands.** early explorers, who considered the South Sea islanders all incorrigible thieves, had underrated their powers of improvement; the Caroline and Flint Islands; Ocean Island, geologically a solitary mass of pure phosphate rock that was commercially valuable; two small neighbours of Pitcairn, also bearing phosphates; the Starbuck, Vostoc, Christmas, Fanning, and Penrhyn Islands, the three last being acquired for the purpose of laying a cable from Canada to Australia; and several minor rocks and crags and atolls, whose annals are known only to the winds that whisper through their belt of palms, to the cyclones that sometimes sweep them bare, and to their most frequent visitors, the birds that carry the seeds of plants and ferns to restore the life destroyed.

Some of these small dependencies, the Cook Islands, whose capital of Rarotonga was one of the most beautiful **Depen-** and fertile spots in all the South Seas, Palmerston, **dencies of** Penrhyn, and Suwarrow Islands, and Chatham **New Zea-** Island, were grouped together under the adminis- **land and** **Australia.** tration of New Zealand;² others—Norfolk Island, Bird and Cato Islands, and Lord Howe Island—were governed from Australia.³ And a movement was started in Fiji for the incorporation of that archipelago with the Government

¹ Colonial Office Reports, 1909-10.

² An account of these islands is given in the *New Zealand Year Book*; a detailed memoir of the largest may be found in *Mehr als fünfzig Jahre auf Chatham Island*, by Bruno Weiss (Berlin).

³ Lord Howe Island has a petty history typical of many places in the South Seas. Discovered in 1788, in 1833 it was settled by three British sailors, from a whaling vessel, three Maori women and two boys. These lived there for some years, and were afterwards bought out, although they had no legal title, by two Sydney gentlemen, who settled there. The population in 1909 was about a hundred. A murder was once committed on the island, but nothing else seems ever to have happened worth recording.

of New Zealand.¹ This movement was the expression of a feeling against Crown colony administration; but it was weakened by the fear that, whatever benefits might be derived from association with the freer institutions of New Zealand would be fully neutralised by the possibility that the Parliament of that colony would prohibit the use by the planters of cheap coloured labour, which was unanimously agreed to be essential to profitable cultivation.

This minor unionist movement, among islands which nature had doomed to disunion, was for the time hardly more successful than similar movements for federation in the West Indies.² Nevertheless there were many who wished it well, both among officials, who soon realised the difficulty of administering such widely scattered territories, and planters and merchants who understood the advantages of union and a settled form of government.

Attempted
Political
Union of
British
Islands.

But the opportunity of uniting all the islands of the Pacific under one administration had passed. Much had been lost by the reluctance of British statesmen to increase their imperial responsibilities; and other nations, which had realised the value of the islands in the South Seas, had hastened to annex what territories they could when the impulse towards European expansion became urgent in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. New Caledonia was occupied by France;³ several groups of islands and a large portion of New Guinea were taken by Germany, and high tariffs imposed which effectually excluded British traders.⁴ The Sandwich Islands, the strategic key of the Pacific Ocean,

¹ See pamphlet, *The Federation of Fiji with New Zealand* (1901).

² Vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. ii.

³ It is a curious coincidence that New Caledonia as well as Nova Scotia should belong to France, and that New Britain in the South Seas should fall to Germany. On the other hand, both New France in North America and New Holland and New Zealand in the antipodes have become British. So much for the sanctity of names.

⁴ Solomon Islands Report, 1903.

were proclaimed the property of the United States in 1898.¹ The Samoan chiefs who visited New Zealand in 1885 to request the annexation of their country by the colony were refused by the Imperial Government, although New Zealand wished to consent,² and Samoa passed to other hands; while the New Hebrides group, where two generations of British missionaries had laboured, were administered by a joint committee from England and France.

The largest and most valuable of all the islands in the Pacific Ocean might also have been wholly British had the British Government been alive to its value. The Papua, 1884. great country of New Guinea or Papua,³ which had been discovered by Latin adventurers in the early sixteenth century, had not been claimed by any European power when it was annexed by two captains of the English East India Company in 1793. But that great corporation, which objected to the enlargement of its sovereignty even in India,⁴ had certainly no desire for territory so far afield as Papua; and the Dutch eventually annexed the island in 1828, four years after the conclusion of that disastrous Treaty of London which forbade Britain to occupy any of the islands south of Singapore.

The Dutch occupation, however, was more nominal than

¹ These islands were annexed—without authority—by a British Naval captain in 1843; his act was promptly repudiated by the Imperial Government, which was certainly unaware of the value, and was perhaps not too precise as to the position, of the Sandwich Islands. Those who enjoy the melancholy task of studying lost opportunities will take pleasure in reading the *Official Correspondence relating to the Provisional Cession of the Sandwich Islands* (1843).

² See Sir Robert Stout in (London) *Review of Reviews*, January 1901.

³ Papua was the name given to the inhabitants by the people of the Moluccas, on account of their frizzled hair. The name New Guinea is supposed to originate from the belief that the island was opposite the African Guinea.

The chief authorities are Moresby's *Discoveries in New Guinea*; Thomson's *British New Guinea*; and the voluminous correspondence of the Colonial Office.

⁴ See the second volume of this work. For the Treaty of London, vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. ii.

real; for that hardy commercial people already had their hands full in the Malay Archipelago. And when Captain Moresby of the British Navy explored the southern coasts of New Guinea in 1873, discovering in the important China Straits a new direct ocean highway between Australia and China, he found no sign of any effectual occupation by Holland. He therefore took formal possession, on 24th April 1873, in the name of Britain, of several islands, being persuaded that 'these islands would some day become English homes; for all the conditions were here—beauty of aspect, high land, unbounded fertility, position on an open sea, and at the entrance of the shortest route between Australia and China. I felt that the future might safely be trusted to time.'

To time, perhaps, but not to the British Government, which refused to confirm Moresby's annexation, despite appeals from the people of Australia and the Royal Colonial Institute of England.

But when the imperial authorities refused, the colonial authorities acted. Queensland annexed the islands lying between her coasts and the shores of New Guinea in 1878; and in 1883 the Queensland Government sought to force the hands of the Gladstone Cabinet in London by annexing in the name of the Crown the whole south-east of the island of New Guinea. The action was again repudiated by the British Government,¹ but it had partly succeeded in its aim, for, on 6th November 1884, the proclamation of British sovereignty was officially announced over the district which Queensland had claimed. A few weeks later in the same year Germany occupied the northern coasts of the island.

Had the British Government been more alive to its opportunities, the whole of Papua might have been British territory; but, as it was, that fatal indecision which had ruined imperial policy in the Malay Archipelago² threw away two-thirds of Papua.

¹ See bk. xix. ch. iii.

² Vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. ii.

For the first few years little was done to develop the potential wealth of the new British colony; but white planters gradually took up land; and rubber, cotton, sisal-hemp, and coffee and sago were grown with some success. The cultivation of the island, however, had hardly begun when in 1906 it was placed by the British Government under the direct administration of the Commonwealth of Australia; nor was the interior even yet thoroughly explored. The total white population, including numerous missionaries and officials, was about six hundred.

This tardy development of Papua cannot fail to suggest that there were more valid reasons for the reticence of the British Government in regard to a forward policy of annexation in the Pacific Ocean than its critics in Australia were willing to admit. It is evidently not sound statecraft to annex a country, be it island or continent, unless use can be made of it, either for human settlement, for commercial enterprise, or for strategic purposes. It increases the imperial expenditure on defence and administration to no purpose; it enlarges the possible field of attack by enemies, and weakens the resources of the annexing power by spreading them over too large an area. In any case, the islands of the Pacific Ocean, remote as they were from Britain, and scattered as they were over so vast an area, were difficult to defend, perhaps even more difficult than the West Indies had been in the eighteenth century;¹ and the necessity of defending them in time of war would have diminished the strength of the imperial defences elsewhere. Britain had secured the whole of Australia and New Zealand, the greatest and most valuable of the countries in the antipodes; and while large portions of Australia were still unpopulated, and therefore still open to attack, it may well have seemed sound policy to secure the development

¹ Vol. i. bk. ii. ch. vi.

and consequently the safety of the island continent before annexing the islands of the Pacific Ocean, even with the knowledge that those islands would probably pass to other hands, and British traders be excluded from them.¹ The empty spaces of the Australian tropics were the true answer to the advocates of wholesale annexation in the Pacific.²

CHAPTER II

THE AUSTRALIAN TROPICS : 1824-1900³

THE long northern shores of Australia, which face the Pacific Ocean and the isles of Malaya, across and from which Asiatic mariners had come and gone from time immemorial on regular visits to the southern continent, had and still have a peculiar place in the history of the English in the antipodes. The first parts of Australia to be discovered by Europeans,⁴ they

¹ As they were in the German protectorates by high tariffs.

² Those who care for political parallels may notice that in the Pacific, as in Asia, Britain was first attracted by the islands—Tahiti in the former case, the Spice Islands in the latter—while the continents—India and Australia—were in some sort afterthoughts. But in each case the policy was subsequently changed. British traders had little success in the East Indian islands, their first objective; but they conquered India (vol. ii. and vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. ii.); similarly, Britain secured the whole of Australia, which she had at first despised, and lost some of the Pacific Islands. She has had little reason to repent of her bargain in either case.

³ The chief materials for this chapter are to be found in the *Official Reports of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners* for 1842 and the following years; papers in vols. ii., iv., and ix. of the *Geographical Journal*; Windsor Earl's *Enterprise in Tropical Australia* (1846); T. B. Wilson's *A Voyage round the World*; *The Northern Territory as it is*, by W. J. Sowden (1882), a useful book; a chapter in Wood's *South Australia* (1894); the *Report of the Northern Territory Commission* (1895); the *Report on Hygiene in the Northern Territory*, by W. Ramsay Smith (Adelaide, 1906), and the *Report on the Northern Territory of South Australia*, by the National Association to federalise the Northern Territory (Melbourne, 1902). The two most interesting books on North Australia are Searcy's *In Australian Tropics*, a valuable work; and Mrs. Dominic Daly's *Digging, Squatting, and Pioneering Life in the Northern Territory*.

⁴ Bk. xvii. ch. i.

were the last to be developed ; and their tardy colonisation was attended by troubles and vicissitudes hardly known elsewhere in the settlement of the continent. Physically among the richest territories in Australia, they are politically among the poorest ; geographically among the largest territories, they have remained in population the smallest of all. The causes of this curious contradiction will become apparent after a brief summary of the unfortunate and depressing annals of the Australian tropics.

The first white settlement in northern Australia, being founded in convict days, bore the mark of crime upon its face. In the year 1824 a small colony of British soldiers and convicts was planted on Melville Island, a thickly-wooded and fertile country that looks as though it had been broken off from the Australian mainland, which here juts out far into the Indian Ocean. The party numbered about one hundred and twenty-six in all, and the settlement was a failure from the first day of its foundation to the last of its short existence.

The convicts were no better colonists in the tropics of Australia than they had been in its more temperate regions. The two supply ships that were sent to provide the garrison were both lost. The aborigines were certainly unfriendly, and were said to be ferocious ;¹ the climate was hardly kinder than the aborigines. Even a devoted believer in the future prospects of the settlement could only say that the place was 'not very unhealthy' ; more outspoken critics affirmed that it was as deadly as it was hot, and suggested that hell itself could hardly surpass Melville Island in either respect.

After two short years the place was abandoned as hopeless ; but its failure did not prove that all white colonisation in tropical Australia must fail. A site was now found on an

¹ It is believed that Malay pirates had carried off some of the islanders as slaves. Hence their suspicion of strangers.

inlet of the Victoria Peninsula called Raffles Bay, and here the next experiment in colonisation was tried. It proved more successful than its predecessor, but not much longer lived; and after four years this settlement was also deserted.

Raffles Bay,
1827-9.

Its abandonment led the way to a more ambitious scheme. A military port was established at Port Essington, a few miles from Raffles Bay, in 1831; and although it was admitted that the place had few attractions to the casual visitor, it was suggested that it held out great hopes of success to the permanent settler. Unhappily it failed to tempt either the one or the other.

Port
Essington,
1831-49.

Official orders had been given that the settlement should be established on 'the most frugal footing possible,' but a Government House, a church, a storehouse, and officers' quarters were at once erected.¹ These, however, were of less vital importance than settlers to cultivate the soil, and settlers were precisely what the colony never obtained. Land was offered at five shillings the half acre, a reasonable enough price in the circumstances; but so little interest was taken in the place in England, that even had it been available at a halfpenny an acre it is doubtful whether there would have been many bidders.

And Port Essington, lying on an almost land-locked harbour, was as unhealthy for human beings as it was safe for vessels in distress. A few years' experience demonstrated that it had failed either to attract or retain settlers, and in 1849 it was abandoned—the third unsuccessful attempt to colonise the Australian tropics.²

¹ So substantially were these built, in spite of the injunction to economy, that sixty years later Alfred Searcy found their remains in excellent preservation. And that in a tropical country.

² Another small settlement was founded and abandoned at this time at a place named, after the then Colonial Secretary and future British Premier, Gladstone. Its story, which resembles that of Port Essington, has been told by J. F. Hogan in *The Gladstone Colony; an unwritten chapter of Australian history*.

For some years enterprise now ceased ; but when the explorer Stuart made his great journey across the continent from south to north in 1862, interest in the neglected country once more revived. The following year the colony of South Australia sought and obtained from the Imperial Government permission to incorporate the Northern Territory, to the extent of more than half a million square miles, in her dominions—an annexation which not only made the name of South Australia geographically meaningless, but one which burdened the ambitious colony for more than forty years with an expensive and embarrassing possession that became popularly known as the white elephant of South Australia.

For the tale of misfortune in the Australian tropics continued with little intermission. The site of a town was chosen at Escape Cliffs, but abandoned as unsuitable ; gold was discovered, but not in paying quantities ; and when the city of Palmerston was founded in 1869 on Port Darwin—a magnificent harbour that was proclaimed inferior only to Sydney and Rio de Janeiro—it had for some time neither inhabitants nor trade. A large part of the Northern Territory was now mapped out by surveyors, and land was offered at low rates ; but at Port Darwin, as at Port Essington, there were few bidders.

In 1870, however, the luck seemed to turn. The first squatters arrived overland with flocks and herds. Large deposits of gold were discovered, and the vast mineral wealth of the Northern Territory was noised abroad. Its resources, which included extensive copper, silver, and tin mines, were not indeed exaggerated ; but the gold mining fever which now attacked the puny colony was almost more dangerous to its existence than the past neglect.

Speculative companies were formed by the score to exploit the resources of the Northern Territory, and most of these companies failed, to the disgust of the too credulous public,

who, as usual, blamed anything rather than their own folly. The disillusioned miners, who had anticipated a second Ballarat, and had asked £5 a week wages and their rations during the boom, agitated for public works to be started at the expense of the Government to employ them after the crash. And many of the squatters, hampered by the lack of water and the prevalence of cattle disease, abandoned their holdings after a few years, and left the country in disgust.

Once more gloom settled over the unfortunate land. The most that could be said was that the settlement at Port Darwin was not abandoned, and that an overland telegraph line placed that lonely outpost in communication with Adelaide after 1872, while the oceanic cable from Java and Europe, which terminated here, soon linked up the Northern Territory with the outer world.

But when a party of politicians from South Australia visited their struggling dependency in 1882 they found the total population of Palmerston no more than one hundred and seventy Europeans and three hundred Chinese, and many of the former were only temporary residents. And another township in the Territory, as one of the visitors ruefully confessed, consisted only of a tavern and a cemetery, both of which seem to have been well filled ; a more pretentious city boasted a hotel, a post-office, and a store, all situated in a malarial swamp.

The cost of food, and therefore of labour, was high. The expense of communication and cartage in a land destitute of roads and railways was prohibitive ;¹ the produce of the country, for all its fertility, was small, and every budding industry was hampered by the distance from a market and the lack of cheap and regular ocean freight. The laws, too, that had been passed by the South Australian Parliament on the other side of the continent to deal with conditions

¹ One hundred pounds a ton had been demanded—and paid—for cartage to Port Darwin from a short distance inland.

of which it knew little were stigmatised in the Northern Territory as a mere worthless *olla podrida* of inapplicable regulations and futile restrictions.¹

But that seems to have been almost the low-water mark of the Territory under South Australian rule. In 1886 a railway was begun into the interior, which was intended in time to stretch across the continent to Adelaide, but which in fact only reached as far as Pine Creek, some hundred miles inland, before it was temporarily suspended.² Short as the line was, it had some effect in developing the country. The pastoral stock increased,³ and the European population numbered 1110, and was increasing, in the year 1907. Three years later it had risen to 1418, of whom only 271 were women.

It can hardly be suggested that a population of less than two thousand, smaller than that of many an insignificant English village, in occupation of a territory of more than five hundred thousand square miles, could be regarded as a successful outcome of nearly ninety years of colonisation. Nor were the other tropical districts of Australia much more thickly inhabited. The vast northern division of West Australia had at the census of 1901 a total population of but 4727 males and 800 females.⁴ The Cape York division of Queensland reckoned fewer than 3000 white settlers all told; the total white

¹ *The Northern Territory Times Almanac and Directory.*

² The Northern Territory Commission reported in 1895 in favour of entrusting the completion of the transcontinental line to a private company, which should be financed on the land grant system that had proved so successful in Canada. The idea was unfortunately dropped.

³ In 1891 the live stock comprised 11,919 horses; 1259 milch cows; 212,835 horned cattle; 45,902 sheep; 3056 goats, and 1806 pigs.

Between 1881 and 1900 gold to the value of £1,639,908 was exported; also some copper, tin, and silver.

⁴ The northern coasts of West Australia were opened for settlement in 1863, the State Government granting free stock runs of the enormous extent of one hundred thousand acres each. Two small parties of settlers went to the Roebuck Bay district, and found good land; but the colony grew very slowly and was abandoned after some years, owing to alternate drought and floods, and the small profit on sheep-breeding. Its meagre annals are described in a pamphlet printed at Perth, West Australia, in

population of tropical Queensland north of Capricorn was about 33,000 men and 17,000 women in 1901.¹

The failure to colonise the tropic north of Australia was too clear to be disputed. It had not shared in the development of the temperate south, nor had it advanced so rapidly or so far as many other tropical countries under European control elsewhere. But the reasons for this stagnation are not difficult to find.

Four main factors affect the success or failure of a colonial settlement: (1) The natural resources of the country must offer a reasonable prospect of success; (2) its **Causes of** government must be moderately good; (3) its **the Failure.** climate and health conditions must offer a fair chance of life; and (4) these things secured, it must attract a sufficient population for its needs, and, under the complex conditions of modern industrial life, it must also attract a certain amount of capital from outside.

1. As regards the natural resources of tropical Australia there could be no ground of complaint. Much of the country was luxuriantly fertile; many of the precious metals were found in abundance. The most serious drawback was the lack, in some parts, of permanent water; but in many places that were hardly inhabited at all water was abundant.²

2. Less important than either the natural resources or the climate of the Australian tropics, but still important, was the question of their government, which admittedly left much to be desired. The few settlers in the northern parts of West Australia were remote from the administrative centre of the 1864, called *The Northern Territory of West Australia*; and by Despeissis, *The North-West and Tropical North*, published by the West Australian Government Department of Agriculture, 1911.

Roebuck Bay itself was perhaps better known for its pearl-fishery carried on by white men and native divers. An account of the industry is given in Taunton's *Australind*.

¹ For the Queensland sugar industry see the next chapter.

² Despeissis remarks that millions of acres of rich grass plains would be available for settlement in West Australia alone, if the rivers were dammed.

province at Perth ; the little colony at Port Darwin was out of touch with Adelaide ; and in tropical Queensland an agitation was set on foot for a separation from the authorities at Brisbane.¹ In each case the facilities for communication were few ; the State Governments, whose capitals were situated in the temperate zone, had little money to spend in developing their tropical provinces either in the building of railways or irrigation works. And the laws made in temperate regions by men who knew little or nothing of tropical conditions were not always suitable ; it would certainly have been better for the Australian tropics had they been amalgamated into one large province under one control, with a boundary-line running east and west, instead of north and south. The Northern Territory in particular suffered considerably from this cause.

3. Even under an inefficient or a thoroughly bad Government, however, men will often find it possible to live and prosper, as the example of some South American republics attests ; but a thoroughly bad climate will do more harm than the worst government in the world. And many hard things were said against the climate of the Australian tropics, but not always with justice. Like many, if not most, tropical countries, the north of Australia gained the reputation of being unhealthy ; and that reputation was not wholly undeserved. But in this respect the ignorance or carelessness of the settlers was more to blame than any radical defect in the climate or the country itself. The colonists' houses were generally badly built, often of corrugated iron without verandahs, which made them resemble an oven more than a human habitation ; and the sites were badly chosen. If a man makes his abode on a swamp he usually pays the penalty in the shape of rheumatism in a cold country, malaria in a hot one.

Yet the climate and the country both had defenders. One enthusiastic lady remarked that the climate ' nearly resembled

¹ See bk. xix. ch. iii.

the summer of Rome ; it was better than that of India, and far superior to that of Adelaide, Melbourne, or Sydney.'¹ A new-comer to tropical Queensland declared emphatically that ' I would not leave my little wooden hut where the sun shines, to go back to the snows of England ' ;² and if his words were discounted as those of inexperience, an official of many years standing in the Northern Territory held that the climate was splendid, the rainfall excellent, and that ' all who had lived there for any lengthened period deeply regretted leaving, and had the craving to get back again.'³ And a politician who visited Port Darwin in 1907 on a tour of inspection saw white men and women who had lived there for thirty or forty years, who looked in splendid condition, and agreed that the climate was healthy for those who led an active life.⁴

A more definite statement as to the health conditions in the Northern Territory was made by a medical investigator, and supported by statistical evidence.⁵ He found the death rate among whites lower than that among Kanaka labourers, and ascertained that a few white families had been reared during three successive generations in that country ; and in a notoriously unfavourable place in tropical Queensland the same comparison again held good. At Mackay, whose climate was ' more or less that of a Turkish bath all the year round,'⁶ the annual Kanaka death rate was from twenty-six to thirty-two per thousand, and the white death rate only twelve per thousand.⁷

¹ Mrs. S. E. Abbott in *Empire Review*, February 1912. A summer in Rome is not, however, an unmixed joy.

² *London Globe*, 15th July 1908.

³ Searcy's *In Australian Tropics*.

⁴ J. C. Watson, sometime Commonwealth Premier.

⁵ *Report on Hygiene in the Northern Territory*, by W. Ramsay Smith (Adelaide, 1906).

⁶ *Some Notes on the Town and District of Mackay* (1905), quoted in *Nineteenth Century*, February 1910.

⁷ It is possible, however, that a good many whites who found the place unhealthy left the tropics and died elsewhere ; the Kanaka labourer could not do so. This deprives the statistics of some of their value.

Other official evidence stated that white children in tropical Queensland, even at Cooktown in the north of Cape York peninsula, showed 'a marked capacity for steady and sustained hard work,'¹ and there was no indication that these northern children were less industrious or healthy than those in the temperate south.²

This evidence, however, was discounted by sceptics, who claimed that the white man had never lived permanently in the tropics, that he had never laboured there or reared his children there, and that therefore he could have no permanent hold on the tropics.³ This was the traditional view, and it could have been supported by much good evidence from other colonies elsewhere;⁴ while it might have been said, perhaps with justice, that the evidence adduced by those who held the contrary opinion was too limited to controvert the united testimony of white men in India, in West Africa, and in the East and West Indies. The fact that a white schoolboy learnt his lessons in tropical Queensland, or that a white schoolgirl had a living grandmother in the Northern Territory, although interesting and possibly even edifying, scarcely supplied a final answer to the problem—a problem, however, whose whole aspect was changed by the foundation of a school of tropical medicine at the opening of the twentieth century.⁵

But whether or not the white man could live permanently in the tropics and rear his children there, all experience showed

¹ *Thirty-third Report of Secretary for Public Instruction* (Queensland, 1903).

² Professor Gregory, *Nineteenth Century*, February 1910.

³ See, for instance, *Are the Laws of Nature transgressed or obeyed by the continuous Labour of White Men in the Australian Tropics*, a pamphlet by M. Macfie.

Despeissis (*The Nor'-West*) also holds that Englishmen cannot colonise in the tropics; and, since coloured labour is forbidden, advocates the importation of Southern Europeans as specially suited to arduous labour in hot countries.

⁴ See the fourth volume of this work.

⁵ Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. iv.

that he could live there himself for some years and prosper as a master of coloured labour. And neither in Queensland nor the Northern Territory was coloured labour prohibited before the year 1901 ; but while in Queensland some advance was made in the cultivation of sugar with Kanaka workers, in the Northern Territory not even the permission to import cheap labour attracted white colonists in any number.¹

4. The conclusion therefore seems irresistible that the failure to colonise the Australian tropics in the nineteenth century was due neither to a poor soil nor to a bad climate, nor yet altogether to bad conditions of local government, although that was a contributing factor of considerable importance, or to the absence of cheap labour, which could have been imported far more largely had the prospects of founding new industries been more promising. The first unfortunate failures in the Northern Territory helped to discredit the country ; the lack of a trunk railway or of steamship accommodation discouraged the intending settler ; but the real trouble, here as in the West Indies,² in West Africa,³ and in Mauritius and Seychelles,⁴ was that British tropical enterprise generally was under a cloud during the greater part of the Victorian age, partly owing to the adoption of the free trade system by Britain, which hit tropical industries with peculiar force,⁵ and partly on account of the contemporary discovery of natural or chemical substitutes for tropical produce. While that handicap prevailed, the capitalist and the settler found better opportunities elsewhere, and the flowing tide of men and gold which Britain exported year by year directed itself to Canada

¹ For the laws controlling indentured coloured labour, see the following chapter.

² Vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. ii.

³ Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. i.

⁴ Vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. iv.

⁵ This was precisely the effect that Cobden had desired. Vol. iv. bk. xvi. ch. ii.

and the United States, to New Zealand and the temperate regions of Australia, while the tropics were left unpeopled and undeveloped.¹

CHAPTER III

THE WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY: 1841-1910

IN the early days of British colonisation in the antipodes, an English writer who discussed the future of the tropic territories of Australia remarked that the pioneer settlement at Port Melville was like a friendly hand stretched out towards India and Malaya, openly inviting Asiatic immigrants to enter into possession of the vast northern regions of the southern continent.²

**Commercial
Develop-
ment.**

Nearly a century later, an Australian writer of some prominence declared that what had become known as the White Australia Policy, the policy of excluding Asiatics and all coloured races from the continent, was 'not a political theory, but a gospel; a doctrine based on the necessity for choosing between national existence and national suicide.'³

**Opposed to
National
Develop-
ment.**

Between these two conceptions lies a whole world of difference. The older writer thought of the commercial development of the country, the later writer put commerce for the moment on one side, and looked at the national development of the people. The one thought in economic, the other in political, terms; the one doubtless had a conception of plantations controlled by European proprietors and worked

¹ Despeissis remarks that it is 'hopeless to expect that the North will be populated by the residents there, and until the South-West produces an overflow of population that province must remain an empty territory.' Another way of saying that the South-West was more attractive.

² *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, vol. iv.

On some old maps of Australia the north is marked Australindia, as showing its suitability for Asiatic settlement; the south-west is called Anglicania. Neither name came into common use.

³ Editor of Sydney *Bulletin* in London *National Review*, July 1911.

by coloured labourers, a replica of Jamaica and Java on a larger scale; the other would have none but whites in the Australian tropics, and, failing white labourers, he would have no labourers at all. He would willingly have suffered a temporary commercial loss for a permanent national gain; the enormous natural resources of the Northern Territory might lie idle sooner than Australia, by importing Asiatics to do the work which Europeans could not or would not do, should endanger her ideal of 'one race, one language, one Government.'

There is conceivably much to be said for both points of view. The profitable development of a new country on commercial lines is not necessarily ignoble; the rule of one race by another is a form of government that has always existed, and, unless the varying capacity of human beings gives place to the dead equality of the early American Democrats,¹ always will exist. Nor has it necessarily been productive of bad results, as the examples of the Roman Empire and British India sufficiently attest.

On the other hand, the rule of one race by another obviously shatters the democratic ideal at its base, and democracy is instinct in Australian nationalism. The democratic instinct in Australia was born before Australian nationalism, it grew with it and ahead of it as an elder brother, and it triumphed with it in the Commonwealth Constitution of 1900, which is at once a democratic and a national expression of public opinion.

The White Australia ideal in its final shape was at once democratic and exclusive, postulating a white Australian nation as an aristocracy of humanity, untouched or uncontaminated by the admixture of its blood with any inferior breed from without, yet a nation

White
Australia
Policy both
Demo-
cratic—

—And Ex-
clusive.

¹ 'All men are created equal,' according to the Declaration of Independence. Any midwife could have taught the authors of the Declaration better than that; but the real trouble is that men will not remain equal.

organised on democratic lines from within. The equality which it desired between man and man in the antipodes could only be attained by the exclusion of those who were branded as inferiors.¹

But three distinct and practically successive stages marked the development of the White Australia ideal from its crude and even brutal beginnings in early colonial days to the full enunciation of the policy under the Commonwealth.

The presence of the aborigines on Australian soil, sometimes friendly, often treacherous, and frequently open enemies from the start, was the first fact that attracted the attention of European explorers and settlers in the antipodes. Here was an admittedly inferior race already in possession of the lands which Britain aspired to populate. They were easily dispossessed, but mere dispossession did not necessarily mean extinction; and had the Australian blacks shown the same tenacity of life and fecundity of race as the African aborigines—who multiplied even when transplanted to American soil—the question of a White Australia, of keeping Australia a purely white man's country, would never have arisen. It would quickly have become a land like the southern United States, the West Indies, and South Africa, a land of white proprietors and coloured labourers; a land of two races, the rulers and the ruled; and the white labourer, with his high standard of life and wages, would never have gained a footing in the antipodes.

There were some who worked for the formation of society

¹ It has sometimes been said, and not unjustly, that democracy can only level down. But the democracy of Australia, like many other products of the antipodes, has in some ways reversed the rule.

It may be added that the agitation against the transportation of British criminals was largely a labour protest against the importation of inferiors, who worked for low wages or none at all, and thus directly as well as in every way indirectly lowered the standard of life. The idea of selection and exclusion, naturally repugnant to a democracy, probably originated in that agitation against low-class whites.

on those lines in early Australia, many good men who hoped to teach the aborigines the doctrines of Christianity and the habits of regular industry, and who looked for the co-operation of white invader and black aboriginal for all future time.¹

But their hope was vain. The Australian blackfellow, like the American redskin and the brown Pacific Islander, vanished from the land with the coming of the white man. His race was incapable of regular industry; European civilisation and education both meant death to him.² Before the first half of the nineteenth century had passed it was evident that his doom was sealed; but the end was hastened by the quarrels with the white settlers, who now pushed him further and further into the interior, and who often waged a war of extermination upon him.³ In that war, waged by civilised men against barbarians, the old barbarous but effectual methods, of the primitive man and the animal kingdom, were repeated; the males were slaughtered and the females saved for the conqueror,⁴ and the unfortunate half-caste children of the unequal union were

¹ In a curious book (*The Friend of Australia*, by a retired officer of the Hon. East India Company's Service, 1830) the suggestion is made that the future flag of Australia should contain 'a black and white hand clasped.' That flag would certainly have been repudiated by the next generation in Australia; but one who had served in India had not the same idea of colour exclusiveness that developed in the antipodes.

² See, for example, the section on Tasmania in bk. xviii. ch. i.

Despeissis (*The Nor'-West and Tropical North*, 1911) observes that the Australian blacks degenerated in contact with white settlers; and imported disease was as potent a factor in thinning their numbers as among the Pacific Islanders. He records a tradition among the tribes of the North that a deadly epidemic of small-pox swept through their country about forty-four years before. It is usually ascribed to infection brought by the Malays; but it is significant that the first white explorers and settlers appeared there in 1866, almost precisely the date of the epidemic.

³ See the section on Queensland in bk. xviii. ch. iii.

⁴ In Sowden's *Northern Territory* it is stated that the settlers often took young black women to live with them, passing them off as boy attendants.

Other cases are mentioned in previous chapters of this volume. When the English settlers killed the male aborigines and took the females to wife, they were but repeating the methods of the old Saxon invaders of England—vol. i. bk. i. ch. i.

often victims of the Europeans' carelessness and lust or the hatred of the mothers' kindred.¹

The miserable remnants of the aborigines were in time cared for by devoted missionaries, and protected by the laws of the colonial parliaments, which recognised a duty to a race that was no longer a danger; but the blacks died almost as fast from kindness as from severity. In Tasmania they were already extinct; in Australia, save for those who derived a wretched subsistence from the desert, they numbered, at the beginning of the twentieth century, only a few thousands.²

The prophecy of an old settler fifty years before, that there was no room for two races in Australia, was coming true. It was a prophecy that went a long way towards ensuring its own fulfilment.

But even before it became clear that the aborigines were a diminishing and finally a negligible factor in the future of Australia, the second phase of the White Australia question was entered upon. The free settlers who had now begun to occupy the country, the squatters and pastoralists who were spreading over the grass lands of the interior, needed labour for the development of their estates; and since the cessation of transportation to New South Wales in 1840, labour was scarce and therefore dear. Failing the aborigines, the importation of cheap coloured labour was suggested, and several shiploads of Kanaka labourers were now brought in from the Pacific Islands; but the supply from the South Seas was inadequate, and the recruiting of indentured kulis from India was consequently suggested.

This proposal was naturally received with resentment by

¹ The half-caste children were often killed by the aborigines; and in the *Official Report on the Northern Territory* for 1911 comment is made on 'the sad condition of the half-caste females, who are considered by many a proper prey for their passions.'

² At the census of 1911, only 19,139.

the white labourers in the colony, who at once realised that the whole standard of life would fall with the introduction of the cheap kuli; but it was from England that succour came. In 1843 the Imperial Government refused to sanction the scheme.

The authorities in London, who had no special reason to anticipate any objection to coloured labour in Australia,¹ had regarded the question from the Indian rather than the colonial standpoint; but for the time the Imperial Government had unconsciously supported what was now beginning to take practical shape as the White Australia doctrine, the doctrine that Australia should be reserved for the white man—a doctrine with which for some time subsequently little practical sympathy was shown in England.²

The question now lapsed for some years. But it revived in more acute form after the discovery of gold in Victoria and New South Wales in 1851.

Among those who took part in the general rush to Australia at that time were numerous Chinese immigrants, whose virtues and whose vices, whose industry and whose

¹ Apart from the fact that the original suggestion to import kulis had itself come from New South Wales, the West Indian colonies were experimenting with indentured Asiatic labour at this time—vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. ii.

² England would certainly have sympathised more with Australia had her own labour market at home been disturbed by cheap imported labour. And there are clear enough indications that it would not have taken very much persuasion to raise at least as much prejudice against the Chinaman in England as in Australia. Everybody who was in England at the time of the 1906 election remembers with what success the Liberals used the cry of Chinese labour in South Africa to discredit their opponents, who had sanctioned its introduction (vol. vi. bk. xxvi. ch. iii.); a year or two later the presence of a few Chinese laundrymen at Liverpool led to very high feeling in that city. And not very long ago, when addressing a meeting in the East End of London, I happened to touch on this very question of the Chinese in Australia. Forthwith a wrathful beery voice surged out of the maze of smoke from a hundred pipes. 'Never mind their troubles,' it said. 'Wot abart the (roseate) Chinamen in the West India Dock Road rahnd the corner? Doin' honest men art of jobs, they are; skunks every one of 'em, I calls 'em.' And in truth the owner of that voice called them sundry other unprofitable but excessively adjectival things, but he got the cheer of the evening.

social habits, both combined to make them extremely unpopular. Riots broke out; and as soon as the colony of Victoria obtained responsible government in 1855, an Act was passed to exclude Chinese immigrants.¹ It provided that no ship should bring more Chinese into the colony than one for every ten tons of its tonnage, and that for each immigrant so landed the shipmaster should deposit the sum of £10. The Act, with certain small modifications, was adopted by South Australia in 1857, and by New South Wales in 1861. A few years later these laws, which had effected their purpose, were repealed. But in 1877 a Queensland measure, imposing a special fee on Chinese gold-miners, was disallowed by the Imperial Government on the ground that 'exceptional legislation calculated to exclude from any part of Her Majesty's dominions the subjects of a State at peace with Her Majesty is highly objectionable.'² This was the first interference by the Colonial Office in London with the colonial laws of exclusion. Further legislation of similar character was, however, allowed after some demur; the only stipulation being that the exclusion laws should not operate against British subjects of Chinese race from Hongkong.

The whole position was nevertheless so unsatisfactory, as regards the right both of the Imperial Government to veto and the Colonial Governments to exclude, that in 1897 the then Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, adopted the definite attitude of persuading the colonies not to discriminate

¹ It was called, on the 'lucus a non lucendo' principle, 'an Act to make provision for certain immigrants.'

² It may be recalled, as a curious example of changed policy, that Queen Elizabeth promised the Emperor of China free entry for all his subjects into all the dominions of England (vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. vi.).

But the British dealings with the Chinese were far more merciful than those of the Spaniards in the Philippines. In those islands, whenever the number of Chinese rose beyond the number that the Governor thought desirable, they were expelled, slaughtered, or so heavily taxed that they left the colony. In 1763 the Spanish Governor ordered every Chinaman in the island to be hanged—a comprehensive edict. It must be said in his defence that the Chinese had helped the British to conquer Manila (vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. ii.).

against any nation by name, but to exclude 'undesirables' of every nationality. Laws were now passed, modelled on the new Natal Restriction Act,¹ prohibiting the immigration of paupers or persons likely to become a public charge, idiots, lunatics, diseased, immoral or criminal persons, and all persons who, when asked, failed to write in some European language, application for admission to the colony. This last provision allowed practically every European to enter Australia, but excluded every Asiatic.

This legislation had practically settled the future of the temperate regions of Australia as a white man's country. Despite some attempts to evade the laws and to reintroduce Asiatics in order to obtain cheap labour, the number of Chinese in the country had fallen considerably.²

There yet remained the Australian tropics, and here more hesitation was shown in regard to the prohibition of coloured labour.

Asiatics had been excluded from the south as far as possible, because they lowered the standard of living for the European; but in the tropics there was as yet no standard of living for the European except as the proprietor of coloured labour. The novel and unorthodox view that white men could do or should do manual labour in a tropical land found no place in the early history of northern Australia. In 1860 Bowen, the first Governor

3. Asiatics
and
Kanakas in
Tropical
Australia.

¹ See vol. vi. The Australian law is the Immigration Restriction Act, 1901.

² From 38,287 in 1861 to 27,760 in 1907. The number of Japanese had also fallen slightly from 3571 to 3284. In neither case was there much danger of natural increase, for the number of females was under five hundred—a fact which the moralist might deplore, but the politician rejoiced over.

But indeed the wretched oriental was between a cross-fire in this matter of his womenfolk. The few that were married were hated because they increased the number of their race; the majority who were unmarried were hated because their single status allowed them to take lower wages.

Some marriages took place between Chinese men and European women, but public opinion strongly condemned such unions.

of Queensland, had advised the introduction of Asiatic kulis for the cotton fields which he hoped to see planted in the north of the colony ;¹ at one time the importation of Japanese labourers into the Northern Territory was projected ; and the introduction of Indian immigrants was authorised for plantation labour and public works in 1882 and 1890.

Neither Japanese nor Chinese arrived in any number in the unfortunate Northern Territory ; but in tropical Queensland a flourishing sugar industry was built up on coloured labour between 1864 and 1900. Kanakas were imported to work the plantations, and the product of the cane, which fetched high prices, was protected by a tariff in Australia from the bounty-fed sugar beet of Europe.

But the exclusive tendencies of Australian democracy, which had now elevated the White Australia doctrine into a gospel, soon saw a danger in the presence of these coloured labourers in Queensland. The humanitarian and the missionary in the Pacific Ocean had in vain attempted to remove the evil features connected with the traffic in indentured labour ;² but when the two forces now combined to prohibit the importation—the latter from interest in the aborigines, the former from interest in themselves—the alliance was irresistible. One of the first acts of the new Commonwealth Government was to prohibit the importation of coloured labour in Queensland.³

Many of the sugar planters protested that they would be ruined ; it was retorted that it was better they should be ruined than the White Australia ideal perish. Most of them stated that the white man could never do manual work in the tropics ; it was retorted that this had yet to be demonstrated, and that the experience of other countries did not determine the

¹ Bowen's *Thirty Years*.

² See ch. i. of this book.

³ Pacific Islands Labourers Act, 1901

question for Australia.¹ It was advanced that, even if white men could labour in the tropics, their labour would cost so much that they could not compete with coloured labour elsewhere. And to this it was answered that even with coloured labour, Australia had been unable to supply her own demand for sugar; and that if white labour cost more the Commonwealth was ready to pay the price by giving the industry heavy protection against outside competition.

The bold experiment was tried. Nor was it so lacking in success as its opponents had desired. It was said, indeed, that the white labourers were costly, that they were inefficient, that they often struck work and the Kanaka never struck work;² and there was some truth in the contention. But here again it was answered, and with justice, that the acreage of the sugar plantations had increased under white labour from a total of 95,700 acres in 1901 to 133,148 in 1907, that the production had increased during the same time from 93,000 tons to 195,000 tons; and that the imports of foreign sugar had fallen from 84,000 tons to 8000 tons.³

Up to a point the experiment had succeeded during the first ten years that it was tried; and it was indeed a fortunate thing that the trial of white labour in the Australian tropics was contemporary with the foundation of a school of tropical medicine which helped to make the tropics habitable and healthy for the white man.⁴ Had it not been for the better

¹ Agent-General for New South Wales in London *Times*, 17th February 1908. As a fact, white labour of a low or even criminal class had been employed in the early West Indies and in Virginia with some success; but it went under because negro slave labour was cheaper and in many ways better. See vols. i. and iv. ² See *Empire Review*, October 1911.

³ The details of the experiment, which can only be briefly summarised here, may be followed month by month in the *Australian Sugar Journal*.

⁴ See vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. iv. for the foundation of the new school of tropical medicine. It must, of course, be remembered that the ignorance of white men as to the best way of life in the tropics was largely responsible for the view that they were unhealthy. The temperate zone was almost equally unhealthy before the introduction of modern methods of hygiene and sanitation, as recurrent epidemics of smallpox and plague sufficiently attest. Mediæval Italy was as deadly to the European as modern West Africa.

knowledge of sanitation, hygiene, and tropical diseases which now began to be diffused by this means, not even the united forces of the national and democratic instinct would have availed to keep Australia white. Yellow fever had changed the polity of the Church in West Africa ;¹ malaria might have altered the policy of the State in Australia.

But if the experiment of developing the tropics by white labour had not failed, it had not yet succeeded on anything like a sufficiently large scale. The Australian
 Fears an
 Asiatic
 Invasion. tropics were still empty. Yellow and brown man had been excluded by law ; but the white man had not occupied the land he had forbidden to others. And now there came a terrible doubt whether the law of exclusion was sufficient permanently to maintain the White Australia policy on a continent whose upper half was empty.

For a great and unforeseen revolution had occurred in Asia since the first exclusion laws were passed against Asiatics. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when a British army was pushing its way through China as easily as a fork through a potato,² and a British colony was forbidding Chinamen to put foot upon its soil, the idea that any oriental could retaliate on any European would have been scouted as ridiculous. The Asiatic was the weaker man, and he had to pay the penalty of weakness. The possibility that he might also have some views upon the subject, some objections to the theory that he was to be compelled to admit the white man to his country while he was himself excluded from the white man's country, was not seriously entertained.

But since then Japan had emerged into the front rank of the great powers of the world. In the war with Russia in 1904-5, her fighting men had been tested against Europeans on land and sea, and had conquered. China, too, perturbed and restless, had, like Japan, a vast population that was

¹ Vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. i.

² Vol. iv. bk. xv. ch. vi.

already spreading over Malaya,¹ and was only kept out of Australia by severe exclusion laws. But laws are only paper securities unless there is force behind them. Australia had, indeed, the full force of the British Empire behind her small population; but for two reasons she did not altogether trust that force to deal with this question.

The first reason was that, if Australia was all-white and all-British, the British Empire was not. It included India as well as Australia; and there were some who even thought that the destinies of the three hundred million people of India were as important as those of the four million of Australia.² In any case, the Imperial Government, which had to consider its Asiatic as well as its European subjects, was compelled to take a wider view of general policy than the Australian Government;³ the statesman in London had to consider Calcutta and Hongkong, while the statesman in Melbourne had to consider only the Commonwealth. The maintenance of a White Australia might be vital to Australia; it was not vital to the British Empire. And there were many Englishmen who doubted whether the Australian tropics could be permanently populated on a purely white basis. The one question for which Australia would have seceded from the Empire was the White Australia question;⁴ the one question on which she doubted whether the Empire would stand by her was the White Australia question.

And Dis-
trusts the
Imperial
Govern-
ment.

¹ Vol. iv. bk. xv. chs. ii., iii. and iv.

² There were many, too, to whom the whole idea of a racial or colour bar in its Australian form was abhorrent. 'The British Empire,' said the *Sydney Bulletin*, the most bitter of the anti-Asiatic press, 'is a nigger empire run by Jews.' One is sometimes tempted to wonder why that journal has not issued a revised edition of the Bible, explaining that when God made man in His image, it was only the white man who was so favoured, and that although not expressly so stated in Genesis, the rest of mankind was patterned after an inferior model.

³ The Anglo-Japanese alliance, for example, was heartily disliked by Australians.

⁴ I am but repeating the words which Australians have used to me.

The second reason was a practical one. The British fleet was seldom seen in strength in the Pacific; the British army was hardly ever seen at all in Australia.

For a hundred years, indeed, the colonists in the antipodes had rested secure in the power of the British Empire to defend them against aggression. But soon after the twentieth century dawned they no longer felt secure. For the first time since Trafalgar the naval supremacy of Britain was challenged in Europe, by the building of the new German navy; and England was henceforth compelled to concentrate her fleet in European waters, and practically to withdraw from the Pacific, at the very time when the future control of that ocean was exercising the minds of men who dwelt along its shores.

The withdrawal of the British fleet from the Pacific and the emergence of Japan as a new naval and military power, capable of battling with a European Empire and worsting it,¹ entirely altered the balance of international relations in the Pacific. Both Australia and New Zealand,² the two new English nations in the South Seas, saw the menace to their independence; and both were compelled henceforth to rely partly on their own resources, as well as on those of the British Empire.

There were only two means by which the danger could be averted. The first was for the Commonwealth to increase her population, and to fill her vacant spaces; the second was to organise an effective defence force by land and sea.

¹ After the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5 many Russians claimed that they could have conquered Japan in the end, had not the revolutionary movement in European Russia forced them to conclude peace in 1905. I was in Russia a few months before the end of the war, and from my not very exhaustive knowledge of the conditions, I am inclined to agree.

But Chemulfo, Mukden, and Tsu-shima are forcible arguments that cannot easily be disposed of, and it was these, and not the ultimate resisting power of Russia, that Australian statesmen observed.

² See bk. xxi. ch. iv. for New Zealand defence.

The second means was not shirked. The warning of General Bevan Edwards as to the inadequacy of the defences of Australia to resist attack ¹ had not been forgotten ; and it was reinforced by the authority of the greatest soldier of the age, the victor of Omdurman, the general who had brought the South African War to a close,² and had since reorganised the military forces of British India. On the invitation of the Federal Government, Kitchener visited the Commonwealth in 1910 to enquire into its military condition ; and he reported that the existing forces were inadequate in number, training, organisation, and munitions of war ; while the railways, which had been built to facilitate the occupation of the interior by settlers, were for that reason more favourable to the invader than to the defence. The young men of Australia were good fighting material, in his opinion, but they needed regular training to withstand a Regular Army. And he recommended the formation of a land force of 80,000 men, half to defend the cities and ports, and half to be free to operate as a mobile striking force anywhere in Australia. This force should be composed of 84 battalions of infantry, 28 regiments of light horse, 56 batteries of artillery, 7 communication companies, and 14 companies of engineers. The annual cost of maintaining it was to be £1,742,000.³

The Australian Defence Act of the previous year had made provision for the compulsory military training⁴ of every young and able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six, and a previous training as a cadet from twelve

¹ See bk. xix. ch. iii.

² For Omdurman, see vol. iv. bk. xiv. ch. iii. ; for Kitchener in South Africa, vol. vi. bk. xxvi. ch. ii.

³ See *Memorandum on the Defence of Australia*, by Field-Marshal Viscount Kitchener (Sydney, 1910). The whole memorandum is a model of lucidity and clear thought.

⁴ Australia rejected the voluntary system which was still maintained in Britain and the United States ; and South Africa followed Australia's lead in adopting compulsory service in 1912.

to eighteen. This was generally approved, with certain additions and amendments, by Kitchener, as forming the basis of a citizen army which would in time become a powerful force.

The creation of an army on these considerable lines was necessarily a work of time ; but Australia, conscious that an invasion of her territory could only be made by
The Australian Navy. sea, had already begun the construction of a Commonwealth Navy. In 1908, the year after the question had been discussed at the Imperial Conference in London,¹ it was decided to build immediately six destroyers, nine submarines, and two depot ships as the nucleus of an Australian Navy. The cost was to be £1,277,500, and Australia was also to meet the expenses of pay, provision, and maintenance of 79 officers and 1125 men, who were to be provided by the Imperial Government, it being stipulated that as many as possible of the recruits should be Australians. The expenses of maintaining this flotilla were estimated at £186,000 per annum ; and this was to be the first part of a large programme of construction spread over twenty-two years, which, when completed, was to give the Commonwealth the respectable fleet of eight armoured cruisers, ten protected cruisers, eighteen destroyers, twelve submarines, three depot ships, and one fleet repair ship ; all of which were to be manned by a body of fifteen thousand men.²

On the question of administration and control the scheme was open to much criticism, both from the Imperial and the Australian point of view. The officers and men were to form a recognised part of the Imperial Navy, and to be subject to the King's Regulations ; but when stationed in Australian waters—and this was certain to be the normal home of the

¹ The whole question was again discussed in more detail at a specially-convened Imperial Defence Conference in 1909, and again at the Imperial Conference of 1911. The proceedings were wisely kept secret.

² See the Commonwealth State Paper, *Recommendations by Admiral Henderson*, 1911.

fleet—they were to be under the control of the Commonwealth Government ; and although in time of war the fleet was to be placed under the orders of the commander-in-chief of the Imperial Navy, it was not to be moved from Australian waters without the consent of the Australian Government.

Here was at once a conflict of control, and an element of possible friction ; and the fear was very generally expressed that in time of war no Australian Government would allow its fleet out of its own waters, on the principle that it was needed for home defence, and in order to allay anxiety among its own people. In that case the Australian fleet would not be available for the real work of the Imperial Navy, which is to search out the enemy and destroy him, and the Imperial Navy itself would no longer be a single great fighting unit under a single control.

When completed, the Commonwealth fleet would probably be an efficient defence of the Australian coasts, and it would do much to revive the declining British prestige in the Pacific Ocean ; but it would be a means of defence in the narrower sense that it would only be available to repel attack, not a means of defence in the truer sense that the only real defence in naval war is to take the offensive.

This essential duty of defence Australia undertook without reluctance, on behalf of her national ideal, and it is a measure of her patriotism that she did so. But more hesitation was shown in another and not less urgent national duty, the peopling of her vacant territories. So far back as 1897 the Attorney-General of Queensland had warned his countrymen that the only effectual means of keeping the yellow man out of the continent was to bring the white man in, and that in default of that being done all laws were as useless as a sticking-plaster to cure a cancer ; and Kitchener had more recently stated that the ineffective occupation of the country imperilled the stability of the Commonwealth. But this candour, which was no

The Opposi-
tion to Im-
migration.

more than a self-evident truth, aroused immediate opposition from a powerful quarter.

The real driving-force behind the White Australia ideal had always come from those labourers who objected to the importation of cheap labour, whether it was transported convicts from Britain, Kanakas from the Pacific, or indentured kulis from Asia ; and these labourers, who by this means had enjoyed a high standard of comfort and practical freedom from competition in the wage market for many years, had been able to invoke the high principle of national purity and racial improvement in favour of their action. It was now seen how far they were sincere.

The powerful trade unions into which they had organised themselves had indeed supported the White Australia policy strongly so long as it suited their purpose, so long, that is to say, as it was a question of excluding men of colour ; but the moment it became a question of including white men they were up in revolt. However great the ultimate peril to the young British nation, they had no wish to see a large population in Australia, since that might diminish wages and increase competition ;¹ they thought more of their own present and immediate interests than of the national future. And during the twenty years from 1890, when their organisation and power had been steadily growing, they had done much to retard the development of Australia. If the immigration of yellow men had been brought to a standstill, the assisted immigration of white men had also been checked.²

The objections of the trade unionists were in time, however, overruled by the remainder of the community, which was fully alive to the national danger. Despite considerable opposition,

¹ The correlative developments of the anti-competitive school are discussed in bk. xxii.

² The financial crisis of 1893 aided them in their opposition to immigration for some time, as Australia was forced to exercise great care for some little while afterwards ; the drought of 1903 furnished a similar argument to the anti-immigration school.

an Immigration League was founded ; the assisted immigration of approved and desirable settlers from Britain again appeared as a piece of Government policy after 1910 ; and so successfully was it carried out by the Agents-General in London that the regular shipping accommodation between England and Australia was soon found to be inadequate.

It was in the steady flow of this new blood into the Commonwealth that the best hope for the future of the White Australia policy and the young English nation in Australia lay.

BOOK XXI
THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND :
1769-1911

CHAPTER I

TRADERS AND EVANGELISTS : 1769-1838

OVER a thousand miles from Australia, and at the very antipodes of Britain in the South Pacific Ocean, lies a group of two large islands and several smaller ones. They have kept their old Dutch name of New Zealand ; but they have given birth to a new English nation, smaller but not less vigorous than that which has grown up in Australia.

And these islands and this nation are in many ways of peculiar interest in the history of the English people overseas. Australia is a land of strange contrasts to the European ; but in New Zealand the physical conditions, the climate, and even the variety of landscape characteristic of England have been most nearly reproduced in the southern seas. It is there that a nation which loves the ocean can make its home with least disturbance of the old traditions. The exquisite beauty of the land appeals strongly to a race who, whatever their other faults, have deep reverence and love for Nature ; and the beauty of New Zealand is but a visible index to the richness of its soil.

The fertility of the country had not escaped the accurate eye of Captain Cook ; but although he advised the planting of a settlement there, his words were neglected and forgotten

by the British Government and people for half a century.¹ Neglect, however, was not altogether a misfortune for New Zealand at that time; for if the country was overlooked, it at least escaped the criminal taint that stained the earlier years of Australia.

Yet if no colony was planted there, New Zealand was no longer isolated from Europe after its rediscovery by Cook in 1769. English adventurers and traders now called at the islands from time to time, some of them whalers, but most of them merchantmen, who were attracted by the wealth of timber that flourished on that fertile soil, and found a ready market at a good profit in Britain. Of these visitors, those who put in for wood or flax seem to have been reasonably honest; but many were of very dubious character. And they were joined, here as in the other islands of the Pacific Ocean, by desperate men, escaped convicts from Australia, naval and military deserters, and all the scum of the old world that found an asylum from law or prison in the safe distance of the remoter south.

The Early
British
Traders.

Deeds of violence were frequent among them. A chance disagreement with the warlike Maories, whose savage character had been remarked by Tasman, Cook, and other travellers in the antipodes, would end in a fight, a rush for the boats or for shelter; the sailors would ravish the native women, or their captain carry off some Maori beauty from her father's or even her husband's home;² and the outrage would be

¹ Cook's favourable account of New Zealand, bk. xvii. ch. ii., appears to have aroused Benjamin Franklin's interest. The American philosopher approved a scheme to carry the conveniences of life to the islands, which was discussed in a pamphlet dated 29th August 1771. But the idea seems to have been abandoned, and in any case the outbreak of the Imperial Civil War soon gave Franklin a more pressing occupation.

² The fault was by no means all on one side. An early traveller noticed (Dr. Forster's *Observations during a Voyage round the World*, 1787) that the natives sold their women to visitors against their will; and this degrading practice, common among savages in many parts of the earth, was a regular thing in New Zealand. In Johnson's *Plain Truths*, 1840, it is stated that the Maories came aboard his ship, crying, 'White man, you wantee womanee, little one, big one, old one, young one?' Johnson

revenged by the aborigines on the next ship that cast anchor along their coasts. Watching an opportunity, they would seize the innocent captain and crew in an unguarded moment ; the unhappy victims would be killed, cooked, and eaten ; and reparation was thus made by an orgy of blood for the honour of their women or the lives of their men. Or, in more merciful mood, the Maories would spare the life of their captive to enslave him. Tattued from head to foot, forced to observe their customs and to acquiesce in their habits, the luckless wretch who fell into their power henceforth led a precarious existence whose continuance depended on the changing whims of a barbarian master.

But, apart from the ravishing of the native women, a grave scandal was caused by the sale of firearms. Nothing tempted the bellicose Maori like a gun, and there was no lack of traders to supply his wants. In vain were proclamations forbidding the traffic issued by the Governor of New South Wales, who asserted but could not impose his authority over New Zealand ; Sydney was over a thousand miles away, and the dealer was on the spot.

In this miserable condition New Zealand continued during some years, a bloody and lawless land, until Christianity brought the beginnings of civilisation and order in its train.

says that every sailor accepted the offer ; he modestly omits any account of his own proceedings.

Nicholas, however (*Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand in Company with the Rev. S. Marsden*), thought the native women worse than the men. He condemns their immodesty, and remarks that many of them cast alluring eyes upon him. In that case he must have been more attractive as a man than as an author, but he implies that he preferred the company of the parson to that of the ladies. *De gustibus non est disputandum*.

The native women were famous for their beauty ; one writer (*Address on Colonisation of New Zealand*, 1823) waxes eloquent and even sentimental on the congenial topic, remarking that they were 'as fair as Spaniards ; the softness of their large dark eyes spoke the natural tenderness of their souls ; they felt how fickle the European lover was,' etc. To which it is sufficient to add, on the authority of the *Journal of the Statistical Society*, 1838, that forty-nine out of every fifty Maori women had contracted syphilis from the white sailors, and that scrofula and influenza were rampant.

The apostle of the islands was a Yorkshireman. Samuel Marsden, the son of a tradesman of Horsforth, at that time a village not yet swallowed by the smoke of Leeds, had taken Holy Orders in the Church of England, and been appointed chaplain in New South Wales, when accounts of the disorders in New Zealand moved him to the heroic enterprise of converting the Maories. It proved impossible to obtain much help at first from the great missionary societies of England ; but, unshaken in his idea, and at the cost of some pecuniary inconvenience to himself, Marsden purchased a vessel, the *Active*, and set sail from Australia. His destination was the Bay of Islands, the spot which Captain Cook had indicated as the most promising place for settlement.

The
Evangelist
of New
Zealand,
1814.

In December 1814, being then in his fifty-first year, Marsden arrived in New Zealand, and was courteously welcomed by the Maories. He was accompanied by three families and a single man, about twenty-five persons in all ; he likewise brought with him three horses, a bull and two cows, and poultry. On Christmas Day the British flag was hoisted, and the first Christian service was held, Marsden preaching from the text, ‘ Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.’ A native chief translated the purport of his discourse to the listening people ; and when they complained that its meaning was not clear to them, he bade them wait in patience for further lessons. From that day Christianity never lost its hold on New Zealand.

But the work of conversion was terribly slow. Marsden was forced to return to his duties in New South Wales within a few months ; but while those whom he left behind were zealous in their work, it was ten years before a Maori was baptized. And though hoes, spades, and axes were given to the natives as ‘ the silent but sure missionaries ’ of civilisation, they still preferred their old life, in which war had been more common than industry,

Progress
despite
Discour-
agement.

cannibalism a frequent incident, and work a rare accident. It seemed, indeed, useless to preach the gospel of peace to the people when chiefs such as Hongi dwelt in the land, who said, 'There is but one king in England, and there shall be but one in New Zealand,' and drenched the island with blood to fulfil his desire.¹

Nor was the little mission colony itself free from evil influences. A few of the evangelists were unworthy their high calling.² Ruffianly traders—men who trafficked in preserved human heads, and even hired assassins to procure their wares—took up their abode at the station; sometimes, too, there were misunderstandings with the natives, and both homes and lives of the evangelists were in danger.

But in spite of all discouragements, the heads of the mission never for an instant lost heart, and in the end their work began to tell. Marsden, tied to his post in Australia, still found the opportunity to make seven journeys to and fro across the ocean: on his last visit in 1837 the now old and feeble pastor was borne in a litter by the natives. One was rebuked for gazing too long and too intently on the aged evangelist; he answered simply, 'Why should I not? I shall never see him again.' His words were prophetic; the apostle of New Zealand died within the year.

But the seed he planted seemed at last to have taken firm

¹ Hongi had been taken to England, where he was flattered and given many presents by foolish admirers. The flattery he seems to have swallowed as readily as most of us; the presents he sold in Sydney for guns and ammunition.

² Lang, not a very trustworthy witness, it is true, declares that the first head of the mission was dismissed for adultery, the second for drunkenness, the third for an even worse crime (Lang's *New Zealand* in 1839). It is undeniable that some scandals occurred, and the London *Punch* for 28th June 1845 has some comments, which are believed to be by Thackeray, headed 'Stiggins in New Zealand.'

But Darwin, who spent a month in New Zealand in 1835, bears testimony in the *Voyage of H.M.S. Beagle*, to the 'gentlemanlike, useful, and upright character' of the missionaries, whom he thought well suited to their high office. He remarked the contrast between them and the other English residents, who were 'the very refuse of society.'

root. A few months after Marsden's death, when the Bishop of Australia visited New Zealand, he saw 'the chief and the slave stand side by side with the same holy volume in their hand, and exert their endeavours each to surpass the other in returning proper answers to the questions put to them.' He found the missionaries treated with respect as white chiefs, and their advice often sought and taken in domestic disputes. The Bible and the Prayer Book of the Church of England had been translated into the Maori tongue; and if the sanguinary deities of the native creed were still worshipped by most of the islanders, the gentler God of the Christian faith had found acceptance in the hearts of many of the savages.

Time and the stress of changed conditions had yet to demonstrate the strength and the weakness of Marsden's work.

CHAPTER II

THE WHITE SETTLERS: 1839-65

In the year 1837, when the evangelist of New Zealand visited the country for the last time before sailing on his longer voyage across the wide ocean of eternity, the islands contained, besides their aboriginal Maori population, about two thousand white men of European descent. Of these the vast majority were British subjects; a few were Americans. Some, possibly a hundred all told, were missionaries or their wives and children; it was calculated that one hundred and fifty-eight were runaway convicts or sailors; the bulk of the remainder were men who picked up a precarious livelihood by trading with the vessels that put in for water and provisions, or flax and timber, in the various natural harbours of the islands.¹

New
Zealand
in 1837.

¹ *Journal of the Statistical Society*, 1838. The same authority states that in 1836 New Zealand was visited by one hundred and fifty-one ships, mostly British and American whalers. But strict accuracy in such a reckoning was impossible.

Most of these men had taken to themselves, by force, persuasion, bargain, or consent, Maori wives ; and a mixed population was growing up in their rough homes, hardy and strong of physique, daring and adventurous in character, but ignorant and lawless as their parents.

This strange scattered community—if indeed the word community be allowable for a collection of men with no interests in common—recognised no government save necessity and force. Lynch law, said one who knew something of their condition, was their only law ; all debts, said another, were debts of honour, and honour was the scarcest of all commodities in the antipodes.¹

These renegades of civilisation naturally disliked the missionaries, whose endeavour it was to civilise as well as christianise the natives ; the missionaries cordially returned their dislike, for the lawless settlers were a poor testimony to the religion and habits of the white man. On one point only were they agreed, and that was in the common desire to prevent more white men from coming to New Zealand.

But the traders and missionaries wished to keep the colony to themselves for exactly opposite reasons. The lawless settlers knew that the easy license of their lives would vanish with the planting of a regular white colony ; and there is little need to wonder that the missionaries disliked the prospects of white colonisation. They knew that contact with the white man had proved fatally demoralising to the coloured races in many countries ; they knew the type of white man that had been transported to Australia, and they had seen something of that type in New Zealand. And they had no wish for the Maories, whom they had begun to influence for good, to be brought within the evil orbit of the blackguards and prostitutes who made up so large a proportion of the population of New South Wales.

¹ Lang's *New Zealand* ; Campbell's *Present State, Resources, and Prospects of New Zealand* (1840).

But another and less creditable reason was advanced for the missionary objection to colonisation, a reason which it is impossible to gloss over and difficult to excuse. While the evangelists were showing the Maories the road to heaven, they had not forgotten that the good things of earth had a value for themselves; while they preached the vanity of worldly possessions they bought land from their attentive disciples. It was advanced in justification that the missionaries administered the land as trustees for the natives. In some cases they may have done so; but they appear to have lost nothing, and to have gained much, by bartering the Bible for the soil of New Zealand.

Europeans
Purchase
Maori
Lands.

Other white men, however, were now competing with the evangelists in the acquisition of land in this desirable country. If a missionary could boast that he had bought a strip of land with a five miles' frontage on a river for a couple of shirts and an iron pot,¹ a secular company operating on a larger scale could claim that it had purchased a million acres for no more than fifty pounds sterling.²

Nor were these transactions isolated or peculiar. Many of the whites who had settled in New Zealand had bought a few acres from their original owners, or quietly taken possession of uninhabited tracts to which no native claim was made; and the process of purchasing the Maori lands now showed signs of increasing year by year until the whole cultivable area of both islands should pass into the hands of Europeans.

The aborigines, who parted with their rights in the fruitful

¹ The transaction is recorded by Lang. But as a good Presbyterian, he hated the Anglican missionary.

² Another purchase of land by an American about this time led to a complicated legal dispute which was only settled in 1911.

Curious terms of purchase were often arranged. Some years later a case came to light in which four thousand acres were exchanged for a horse, saddle, and bridle, five double-barrelled guns, and a pair of trousers. Thanks to the guns, the native was probably as well satisfied with his bargain as the white man.

soil for petty sums of money or a few valueless presents, parted also with the right of ruling the country. No white man would submit to barbarian government if he could avoid doing so; yet no alternative system of civilised administration had been introduced. Every settler was a law to himself, and too frequently a scandal to others.

But some system of civilised administration was becoming an imperative necessity in New Zealand if worse scandals were to be avoided, if the aborigines were to be protected against the whites, and the whites against each other.¹ The missionaries and the traders between them had broken down much of the old authority of the Maori chiefs, the former by paternal control, the latter by the traffic in spirits and weapons; but they had set up nothing in its place, and neither missionary nor trader was able to evolve a system of government that the other would accept. The European residents, in fact, separated as they were from one another by long distances, jealousies, and suspicion, formed no more than a collection of mutually irreconcilable units.

And no European power had yet annexed New Zealand. Holland had never attempted to occupy the islands to which a Dutch explorer had given the name of a Dutch province. The formal proclamation of British sovereignty which Captain Cook had pronounced in 1769 had long since lapsed by neglect; a similar proclamation of French authority which the Gallic sailor Crozet made two years later had also led to nothing.

The British Government had, it is true, been often urged to take possession of the country which British traders and missionaries were beginning to occupy, and had as often refused to do so;² but events now combined to force its unwilling hands.

¹ One writer of the time declares that the killing of a white man by a Maori was rarer than the killing of a white by a white.

² In 1823, and again in 1828, acts were passed by the Imperial Parliament extending the jurisdiction of the New South Wales Courts of

The fervent apostle of British colonisation, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, whose scheme for a South Australian settlement had been grudgingly consented to in 1836 by the Colonial Office,¹ turned his attention in the same year to New Zealand as a promising field for his ideas. To the alarm and disgust of the official world, which had no desire to see the national possessions enlarged, he stated that 'the country was one of the finest, if not the finest, for British settlement,' and he condemned the 'slovenly, scrambling, and disgraceful manner' in which its soil was being transferred from the Maories to the whites.

The New
Zealand
Associa-
tion, 1837.

To a man of Wakefield's energy and conviction, action follows speech as inevitably and quickly as day follows dawn. Under his direction, a New Zealand Company was formed in 1837, plans of land purchase and land settlement were drawn up, and a vigorous agitation in favour of annexation was carried on against the stagnant Colonial Office of the time.

Now the Colonial Office already hated Wakefield for disturbing its peaceful inactivity as much as Wakefield hated the Colonial Office for its sloth and enmity to his plans; and it steadily opposed the New Zealand Company's scheme, as it had opposed the South Australian scheme, and the early occupation of Victoria.² But a Colonial Office which

Justice to all British subjects in New Zealand. They remained inoperative.

And in 1833 a British Resident was appointed to live at the Bay of Islands. But he was given no power and no escort; and when he persuaded the Maori chiefs to sign a treaty granting protection and facilities to British subjects in New Zealand, he was reprimanded from Sydney for committing a 'silly and unauthorised act' and perpetrating 'a paper pellet.'

¹ See bk. xviii. ch. iii.

² See bk. xviii. ch. iii. The then Colonial Secretary was Lord Glenelg, whose action in Canada is described in vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iv.; in South Australia and Victoria in bk. xviii. ch. iii. His opposition to the New Zealand project was influenced largely by the Church Missionary Society, which objected to colonisation in the interest of the Maories. Some of its agents in New Zealand, however, thought as much of their own interests as of those of the Maories.

opposes colonisation is an anachronism; a government which sets its face against the natural growth of the nation sooner or later finds itself in an impossible position. Wakefield's determination carried the day; and although his Company possessed no charter of incorporation,¹ his patience was exhausted, and he announced his intention of forming a settlement in New Zealand, with or without the British Government's recognition. Shortly afterwards, on 12th May 1839, the preliminary expedition left England; in the following September the first body of emigrants sailed from Gravesend.

The Imperial Government was conquered. But to mark its displeasure at being forced to act when it wished to idle, **British Sovereignty proclaimed, 1840.** it decided to accept the inevitable with as bad a grace as possible. It sullenly instructed the Governor of New South Wales to declare New Zealand British territory, but it determined to obstruct the Company in the antipodes as well as at home.

Yet Wakefield had not forced the hand of the Colonial Office any too soon. Rumours of a French expedition to New Zealand had reached him in 1839, and he had passed them on to the dull ears of the authorities, apparently with no more effect on the Ministry in Downing Street than on the stones of its pavements; and soon those rumours were translated into fact. On 30th January 1840 Captain Hobson of the British Navy hoisted the Union Jack at the Bay of Islands; on 17th June British sovereignty was proclaimed at Cloudy Bay over the Middle Island of New Zealand; on 11th August the British flag was flown at Akaroa. Two and five days later two French vessels arrived at Akaroa with

¹ The Company was offered a charter if it would change its character into that of a joint-stock company trading for profit. But the Colonial Office knew perfectly well that it was the very essence of Wakefield's scheme that the Company should make no profit, but devote all its funds to settlement. It is this mixture of folly and obstinacy in the official attitude that makes one understand why Wakefield's criticism of the Colonial Office was invariably bitter.

fifty-seven emigrants to found a French colony under French sovereignty—two days too late.

A contrary wind, a chance delay to the British agent, and part of New Zealand would have belonged to France; a little hesitation in Wakefield's mind, and the whole country would have been lost to England. On such accidents may the fate of a nation depend.¹

The little band of Frenchmen decided to remain at Akaroa. They settled on the peninsula that had been named after Sir Joseph Banks, the naturalist, who accompanied Cook on the first of his voyages in the Pacific; and for some years they retained their nationality under a French governor. But their numbers, unsupported by fresh recruits, were too few to prevail against the steady influx of British immigrants; and when the city of Christchurch was founded a decade later on the other side of the peninsula that shelters the province of Canterbury from the rough gales of the Antarctic, the vision of a New France in the antipodes had long since faded from their hearts.²

But already the city of Wellington, the first British city in New Zealand, had been founded in 1839 by the New Zealand Company, even before British sovereignty was proclaimed over the island.³ And whatever other mistakes the Company may have made in its active career, it made none in the choice of a site for its first settle-

The French
at Akaroa,
1840.

The City of
Wellington
founded,
1839.

¹ Those who wish to rake over the dead ashes of the controversy between Wakefield and the Government may find all the materials in the *Annual Reports of the New Zealand Company*, the Blue Books of the Colonial Office and the Parliamentary Debates, and Heale's *New Zealand and the Company*. The missionary attitude is defined in the *British Colonisation of New Zealand*, a moderately worded statement published by the Committee of the Aborigines' Protection Society; and some additional light is cast on the subject by Yate's *An Account of New Zealand*, 1835, and Beecham's *Colonisation*, 1838. An article in *Blackwood's Magazine* for 1837 also repays exhumation.

² Some facts relative to the French colony of Akaroa will be found in *Fisher's Colonial Magazine*, vol. iv.

³ There are two good accounts of early Wellington: Petre's *Settlement of New Zealand Company* (1841), soberly optimistic; and Wood's *Twelve Months in Wellington* (1843), sour and pessimistic.

ment, which was intended to be the future capital of the colony.

The twelve hundred pioneer emigrants from England who arrived at Port Hardy towards the end of the year 1839 under the auspices of the Company found the hills that surrounded the harbour at that place almost too high and steep for easy building; and under the direction of Gibbon Wakefield's brother, who was in charge of the settlements in New Zealand, they pushed along the coast to the haven that was already known as Port Nicholson. On this splendid harbour, which was central and easy of access from every part of the islands, and which was surrounded by hills and forests in the midst of a district of rare fertility, the city of Wellington was founded.

The aborigines of the district, who had sold the site to the agent of the Company a short time before, were naturally astonished at the imposing size of the invading party, and enquired whether the whole of the English tribes had not deserted their own country in a body; but they were perfectly frank and friendly towards the new-comers, and none of those unfortunate and often accidental collisions which have too frequently destroyed the mutual goodwill between two different races occurred in these early days at Wellington. The colonists behaved with praiseworthy reticence and fairness to the Maories, and the Maories in turn began to dismantle the stockades around their camps as a sign of confidence, and even to dispense at times with the beloved gun as they walked through the primitive streets of Wellington.

Large as was the first party of immigrants, it was followed by others a few months later. By 1843 the city had four thousand inhabitants, and was growing steadily; a moderate estimate reckoned the value of its houses at £18,000, and of the merchandise in the place at £200,000. Wellington, indeed, although disappointed for the time of its desire to rank as the official capital of the colony, was rapidly becoming the focus of

New Zealand trade, its central position and excellent natural facilities seconding the energy of its people in maintaining a lead over the other settlements that were now springing up elsewhere in the islands.

So rich was the land that good crops were raised even from indifferent soil, while the vine, the olive, the mulberry, and the peach all flourished, and the sheep fattened on the lush-green pastures. Nevertheless, there was much grumbling, and some cause for grumbling, among the colonists. None were indeed subjected to any real privations, but grave inconvenience was caused by delays in conveying the titles of the land to the cultivators. And it was some time before any regular government was established, or courts for the recovery of debt and the punishment of serious crime set up. These matters may be laid to the door of the British Government, which not only refused to recognise Wellington as the capital, but obstructed the New Zealand Company in its work, and neglected its own duties withal ; but the Company itself was open to some criticism. All land was sold at the same price, but it inevitably happened that not all the land was equally valuable. And redress on this point was found impossible when the purchase money had been paid in England, and the purchaser only discovered his mistake in the antipodes. ' With New Zealand,' wrote one tearful critic of the colony and the Company, ' we have been partially disappointed ; by the New Zealand Company not a little deceived. Many who relinquished a moderate competency in England are now suing for charity in New South Wales ; numbers have returned to Europe, and nearly all would return if they could.'

It is not necessary to take these doleful words too literally ; but the mistakes of the Company and the prejudice of the British Government against Wellington as a Wakefield-founded town certainly combined to aggravate the inevitable difficulties of opening up a new country. After a time the

discontent attained rather serious proportions; a panic ensued, and some in desperation even suggested the removal of the whole colony to Chile.¹ Better counsels ultimately prevailed; and while sufficient reforms were introduced to convince settlers that their complaints had been justified, grievances enough remained unredressed to make government-baiting the most popular sport of the day. But as the city obstinately refused to abate its steadily increasing size and commerce year by year, and new roads were driven further into the interior to open up fresh lands for settlement, even the pessimists were convinced against their will that Wellington might have a future. If it was not destined, as its founders had hoped, to become the metropolis of all Australasia,² it was at least to come into its heritage in the second generation, and to be recognised as the official capital of New Zealand.

One of the roads out of Wellington led directly to the younger colony of New Plymouth two hundred miles away to the north-west, a colony founded, as its name implies, by a Devonshire Association under the auspices of the New Zealand Company, and largely pioneered by Devonshire men.³ A quiet but prosperous community established itself here in 1840, almost under the shadow of the noble Mount Egmont; and the proud title of the great Devonian port, which has seen so many emigrants from England bear out of its ample Sound, was given, affectionately but rather absurdly, by the Devonians in the antipodes to their capital, whose harbour ranks among the poorest in New Zealand.

But what New Plymouth lacked at sea was more than

¹ I have sought diligently to discover why Chile was suggested, but can find no indication whatever.

² For the origin of the name of Wellington, see bk. xviii. ch. iii.

³ For New Plymouth see *Latest Information from New Plymouth*, a pamphlet published in 1842; Petre's *Account of Settlement*, which gives the population in 1841 as 534; and Hursthouse's *Account of Settlement of New Plymouth*, 1849.

recompensed on land. The rich light soil of the place was found to be as fertile as any on earth; the black mould of this New Devon bore fruit at least as fine as the good red fields of old English Devon. 'I have seen earth on the cliffs twelve or fifteen feet deep,' wrote an enthusiastic farmer from New Plymouth; 'no rocks or stones have yet been found. The potatoes I brought out with me are growing well, and all the garden seeds; there is wheat and barley doing well, and Indian corn, and fine timber growing.'

The whole colony was purely agricultural, and the city of New Plymouth itself was more like a scattered village than a town. But within ten years of its foundation it could boast a granite church, a couple of chapels, an equal number of taverns, a gaol for its rare criminals, a police station and a hospital, three flour mills, two breweries, a tannery, and two whaling houses.

This rapid growth showed its prosperity as clearly as the fact that it was already producing more than enough for its immediate needs, and was beginning to seek an outside market for its goods; while the settlers of New Plymouth were now spreading their homesteads over the magnificent district of Taranaki, which in a few years more was transformed from virgin forest to a smiling and happy countryside of farms and fields and pastures.

The city and colony which was founded at Nelson in 1841, and which formed the first English settlement on the South Island of New Zealand, was expected to grow even more rapidly than New Plymouth and Taranaki.¹ The settlers were intelligent and industrious, the surrounding country was good, and the situation all that man could desire. An enterprising sheep squatter had even preceded the regular colonists, so attractive did the place

¹ There is a poor account of Nelson in vol. vi. of the *Colonial Magazine*; and a much more adequate description by Fox, *Report on the Settlement of Nelson*, 1849.

appear; and by the year 1843 the city, then only fifteen months old, already counted three thousand inhabitants, among whom were many retired Anglo-Indians. It was an ambitious community, which talked of establishing a college and a church, and of devoting a large fund to building bridges and roads in the district; but at this point the progress of Nelson was unexpectedly checked.

The trouble might have been foreseen by any student of economics who knew the conditions under which Nelson had been founded. The place contained too many labourers and too little capital, the landed settlers having crippled themselves in purchasing their estates, with the result that wages fell when funds grew low; unemployment increased rapidly, and by August 1844 the colony was in the throes of a crisis and the scene of a riot.

From this unfortunate condition Nelson did not recover for several years. Many of the labourers left the town for better wages elsewhere, and the natural increase of the population hardly kept pace with the loss by emigration—a rare and unhappy condition for a young community that had no parallel elsewhere in New Zealand.

Nelson was the least prosperous of the Wakefield settlements in the antipodes; Dunedin, its next successor in the South Island, was less unlucky and more individual in character.¹ But the difficulties surrounding the inception of the Dunedin enterprise occupied Scotland for several years before the new Scots colony was ultimately planted in the South.

Individual Scotsmen had emigrated to New Zealand, and done well in the past; but no purely Scottish settlement had yet been made, or seemed likely to be made there, until the fecund mind of Wakefield brought the idea to the front. The scheme appealed to all the clannish emotions of the

¹ The best account of the founding and early years of Dunedin is Hocken's *Settlement of Otago*.

north ; but it was a time of spiritual stress and industrial trouble in Scotland, and the project fermented long before maturing in the cautious Caledonian mind.

The lack or the irregularity of employment, the grinding poverty of wage-earners in the big lowland cities, and the miserable prospects before gillie and crofter on the bleak countryside, certainly inclined men to emigrate from Scotland ; but the main tide of Scottish emigration had long since set steadily towards Canada, and it was not easy to change its direction to the far South when men had friends and the promise of opportunities awaiting them in the West.¹

The great schism, too, in the Scottish Presbyterian Church, which separated family from family, and even father from son, rendered united national action impossible ; and the first project for a Scottish settlement in New Zealand got little further than a discussion as to the name and the site of the proposed colony.²

Some of the original supporters of the idea now withdrew ; but poor men who saw no chance of a living in Scotland were still appealing for a free passage to the colonies, and a trifle of land for their own cultivation, ' if only for a cow's grass and a kailyard.' Even that modest prospect in a remote and savage district, it was felt, would be better than a prolonged and hopeless struggle at home.

The project for a Scots settlement in New Zealand was therefore never wholly abandoned, however gloomy the prospect of ultimate success. A site had been selected by Wakefield's agent at Otago in the far south of the South

¹ For the Scots emigration to Canada, see vol. iii. bk. x. ch. iii. and bk. xi. chs. iii. and v. It might be interesting to speculate how far the course of history would have been changed had J. A. Macdonald emigrated to New Zealand instead of Canada.

² Various names were suggested, among those rejected being New Reekie, Edina, Ossian, Bruce, and Burns. New Edinburgh was unfortunately reminiscent of the Darien failure (vol. i. bk. iv. ch. iii.) ; but Dunedin, which was finally chosen, was said to be the old Celtic name of Edinburgh, and it had the more important recommendation that Scott had sanctioned its use in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

Island in 1844. It was then 'an uninhabited wilderness,' and 'the vegetation looked barren' in places, wrote the surveyor; but he 'was much pleased with the beautiful valleys' which run down at frequent intervals from the plateau of Otago to the sea, and even a casual glance left no doubt that the soil was fertile and rich.

Four hundred thousand acres of land were bought by the New Zealand Company from the Maories, in readiness for the emigrants; but three years were yet to elapse before the difficulties at home could be surmounted. Only the dogged devotion of Thomas Burns, a nephew of the national poet and a Free Church minister who had resigned his living at the time of the Presbyterian secession, saved the Otago project in the end. But Burns had set his heart on the founding of a Free Church community in the antipodes. He tramped the highways of Scotland for weeks at a stretch to persuade men to join him; few, however, were willing, and many criticised his occupation as one unworthy a minister of religion, and a waste of time to boot.

But the sturdy spirit that had left the manse for conscience' sake triumphed at the last over every difficulty, and on 24th November 1847 the *John Wickliffe*—fitting name for a vessel carrying stern Protestant pioneers—sailed from Gravesend for Otago.

As the ship weighed anchor in the ebbing Thames, the emigrants sang the old Scots chant that was to be their watchword:—

'O God of Bethel! by Whose hand
Thy children all were led.'¹

The solemn psalm which dedicated the new life of the emigrants in a new land must have been the sweetest of

¹ The same chant had been sung a quarter of a century before by the Scottish settlers of 1820 in South Africa (vol. vi. bk. xxiii. ch. v.), when they made their homes in the Eastern Province of Cape Colony. On that occasion, records Pringle, the annalist of the expedition, an antelope was seen gazing at the pioneers as they sang.

triumphal music to Burns. He had won his way through every difficulty that surrounded the beginning of his path, and he had his reward. For the new Scots colony, which was to be called Dunedin, was to be a settlement after his own heart. It was to be formed of none but convinced Presbyterian Free Churchmen, men who had already proved their steadfastness in the great schism; and he was to be their spiritual head.

Early in the spring of the following year 1848—that is, the antipodean autumn—the 278 members of the party landed at Otago. They found shelters erected ready for their temporary accommodation, which the Maories had helped to construct; and the building of Dunedin was at once begun.

Five European houses were already there, the homes of individual pioneers who had arrived three years before. But as these earlier settlers bore such true Scots names as Anderson, M'Kay, and M'Caw, they were recognised as friends and not interlopers, who would welcome the Free Churchmen to their new home.

Every man was now his own architect, builder, and labourer, and his family helped him with the work. The plan of the first houses was simple. A division between living and sleeping rooms was all that decency required or opportunity allowed; the walls were of wattle and daub, or saplings would be fixed side by side, and the holes between the branches filled with clay; the roof was of thatched tussac grass, or shingles, according to taste or the material available. The windows were small, because glass was scarce, and a rough clay chimney carried off the smoke. Furniture was scanty, and the whole household equipment of a settler often consisted of little more than a bunk for a bed, a tub or a log for a chair, and a chest or a rough trestle-board for a table.

On these simple lines was a new society founded in the

southern hemisphere, in the very year of revolution when the whole foundations of European society seemed to be permanently shaken in the north.

Other emigrants soon arrived from Scotland now that the ground was broken. By the middle of 1848 Dunedin contained 88 houses, 93 families, and 444 inhabitants; in 1849 the population had risen to 745, and it grew steadily if slowly for some time.

Within a year or two the colony was securely founded by the industry of its people working on a grateful soil; but for some time money was scarce. Its absence, however, was not seriously felt, even in a Scottish community; traders issued their own notes until the first bank was established in 1857; but the modest stipend of £300 a year which was due to Burns, the pastor and real head of the settlement, was seldom punctually paid.

But credit was easy when all were friends and neighbours. There were many comfortable homes, few hardships, little wealth, and no poverty in the community, which was inclined to be strict in its habits, rather narrow and exclusive in its views, but liberal in its ideas of education.¹

It is true that the colony could only afford one schoolmaster, whose salary was but £60 a year, with an additional grant of two shillings a quarter for every pupil. The grant can have made little difference to the licensed torturer of youth, since in 1853 it was reported that only 100 children out of a total of 270 attended school. But many could not be spared from daily work in the fields and home; and the public library, whose thousand volumes were in constant

¹ An anonymous writer, *Aliquis*, of 1861, speaks less favourably of Dunedin. He remarks that the people were rigidly righteous, but devoted to whisky; and brands them as a collection of murderers, smugglers, convicts, and pimps. He complains, too, that the editor of a local newspaper was nearly strangled in the theatre, and that the police were against him for speaking out. The murderers I deny; the whisky I admit; the pimps I doubt; the editor's sufferings leave me cold. I have known too many of the breed.

request, was a truer index to the mental appetite of the colony.¹

The first newspaper, the *Otago News*, was issued on 13th December 1848, when the colony was only six months old. Priced at sixpence and badly managed, its existence was short and troubled; a second venture was better conducted, but hardly more profitable. It was read, indeed, by the whole colony, but its total circulation was only one hundred and twenty, of which number half were sent abroad, and the disgusted proprietor discovered that every copy of every issue of his newspaper was passed from hand to hand by the appreciative but economical readers of Dunedin.

Crime was rare in this happy community; and when a Supreme Judge was appointed at a salary of £800 a year it was found that the only business of his office was to fine those jurors who, knowing there were no cases to try, had not troubled to attend his summons. In eighteen months there were no criminals at all to be put into the dock, and the scandal of that appointment was speedily abolished. For years, indeed, Dunedin had no securer prison than a tent, and prisoners accused of petty offences were regularly allowed out on parole.

Agriculture and sheep-farming were both profitably carried on by the colonists. Year by year more land was brought under cultivation; and before long an experiment was made to acclimatise the birds and fishes of the old world in southern New Zealand. The venture proved even more successful than its promoters had anticipated; pheasants, blackbirds, thrushes, starlings, goldfinches, and trout, tench, and perch found the climate and rivers of New Zealand admirably suited

¹ The library contained Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, many theological works, and an encyclopædia. A Mechanics' Institute was also founded in 1851, which developed into an Athenæum.

There is a story that a Dunedin tradesman sold a copy of Horace with the remark, '*Opera Horatii*; have it what price you like; there is no demand for music here.' But that proves nothing. I have myself seen Harold Begbie's works blushing in red bindings on the shelf reserved for classical literature in a London bookseller's shop.

to their needs, and it was noticed before long that trees and animals both grew more quickly and to a larger size in this part of the antipodes than in their original home.¹

Perhaps the best testimony to the steadily increasing prosperity of Dunedin was the fact that before the new Invercargill colony was ten years old it had founded a daughter settlement of its own. The little city, which took the true Scots name of Invercargill, was established as an offshoot from Otago in the extreme south of the island in 1857, in the middle of a good pastoral district; and almost as soon as the first rough houses were run up, and the direction of the first streets was decided on, an agitation began for full local independence and freedom from the control of Dunedin.

The good folk of Dunedin had themselves protested some time before against outside interference in their affairs, and an Otago Settlers' Association had been formed Southland Province, in 1851 to protect their rights against others; 1861. it was now uncomfortably evident to them that their own children had also not been slow in learning the lesson of independence, and they were hardly able to deny that the political medicine which they had insisted on taking themselves would be good for another member of the same family. Four years after its foundation Invercargill was allowed to separate from Otago, and to become the capital of the new province of Southland.

Dunedin and Invercargill were sections of Scottish society transplanted bodily to the antipodes; the younger province Canterbury, of Canterbury, which was founded to the north 1850. of Otago in the South Island, was intended to be 'an extension of England with regard to the more refined attributes of civilisation.'² And as Dunedin was the creation

¹ *Report of Otago Acclimatisation Society, 1870.*

² The main authorities are—*The Founders of Canterbury; Letters of Wakefield to J. R. Godley; Plan of the Association for Founding the Settlement of Canterbury (1848), and Canterbury Papers.* Butler's *Canterbury Settlement (1863)* is of little use.

of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Canterbury was entirely the work of the Church of England.

The scheme for an Anglican Church settlement originated, like that for a Scottish colony, in the active mind of Wakefield; Canterbury, in fact, was the last expiring effort of the New Zealand Company, which colonised New Zealand for the Empire, and ruined itself in the process.¹ Wakefield had certainly but little belief in the Church of England as a colonising agent, basing his objection on its subordination to the State at home and its control by the Colonial Office in its work overseas. But he was quick to see that new life had been infused into the Church by the Oxford Movement; and though he disliked Selwyn, the new Bishop of New Zealand,² and distrusted the old Evangelical party as an opponent of colonisation in the interests of the Maories and the missionaries, he believed it possible to gain sufficient adherents from the great bulk of moderate opinion in the Church to carry through his idea.

He had not miscalculated. There was, it is true, a good deal of disorganised opposition; the alarmed and suspicious Evangelicals condemned the proposed settlement as a plot engineered by their arch-enemy Pusey, and even suggested that Wakefield was a Jesuit in disguise; while that unclerical cleric, the irrepressible Sydney Smith, who would have hurled a pun at St. Peter at the very gates of Paradise, declared that his cloth made bad colonists, and roundly condemned the beginning of the scheme as unsound, and predicted its end as failure.

¹ Wakefield was always ready to utilise a religious organisation as a colonising agent, and he was generally successful. But when he suggested that a purely Jewish settlement should be formed in New Zealand, he was met with the unanswerable objection that the Jews could not live unless there were Christians for them to live upon. The rebuff came from a Jew, and no more was heard of that project.

² 'I am sure he is not a wise man.'—Wakefield to Godley. Wakefield's test of wisdom was invariable agreement with his views, and judged by this standard Selwyn certainly failed.

But parsonic thunders rarely kill. The project went forward, encouraged by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the moderate High Church element, and in 1850 the first party of eight hundred laymen sailed for New Zealand. For the most part the pioneers were men of middle age and of the middle class of English society; they were accompanied by their wives and children, and they were, said one who accompanied them, earnest and thoughtful men whose motive it was to find room for their sons.

Two million four hundred thousand acres had been secured for their inheritance on that wide sweep of fertile plain which has since taken the name of Canterbury; the whole was to be used for pastoral and agricultural settlement, except that portion which was reserved for the town of Christchurch and its port, named Lyttelton from one of the promoters of the enterprise.

The land was to be sold to the settlers at the high price of £3 an acre. No settler was allowed to purchase less than fifty acres; but—and this was a characteristic fault of the Wakefield system of colonisation—there was no limit to the amount that could be bought. All the evils of speculation in land, of holding land for a rise in value, were therefore risked, and this became the seed of much future trouble in the antipodes wherever the Wakefield system was allowed free play.

But whatever its ultimate faults, it at least raised a large sum for immediate development. Of every three pounds paid, ten shillings was given for the land, ten shillings was reckoned as absorbed in expenses, a pound was to be allowed to further the emigration of labourers, and a pound for the endowment of religion and education.¹

¹ Sydney Smith violently attacked the grant for religious and educational purposes, saying that the promoters were throwing away a third of their capital on idlers and non-producers. If that witty cleric thought so badly of his colleagues in holy orders as to denounce them roundly as idlers, he might have been expected to understand

And Canterbury prospered from the first. 'The land is a certain independence, though not a fortune,' wrote one of the pioneers; flocks grew and multiplied on its pastures, and the colony was soon beyond the fear of want.

Each of these settlements—Wellington, New Plymouth, Nelson, Dunedin, and Canterbury—had been founded through the agency of the New Zealand Company, and with the one exception of Nelson all had prospered. But not one of these settlements had been recognised by the British Government as the capital of New Zealand, although the situation of Wellington was an ideal one for the purpose, and had been selected by the Company with the intention of making it the headquarters of administration.

But the Company had committed an unpardonable sin in the eyes of the Colonial Office when it took the colonisation of New Zealand into its own hands in 1839. It had forced the Colonial Office to act when it wished to sleep, and that Office had never forgiven Wakefield for adding New Zealand to the British Empire. Even a government department is sufficiently human to love revenge, and the Colonial Office revenged itself upon Wakefield in a peculiarly foolish way. It could not, indeed, destroy his work, but it could refuse to avail itself of what he had done; and it therefore set aside his choice of Wellington as a capital, and determined to select some other spot for the government of the colony.

There were, however, two disadvantages in this course. The first lay in the fact that the Colonial Office knew little more of the geography of New Zealand than it did of the geography of heaven;¹ the second was due to the obvious

that education produced some results. But as he had himself been a tutor in his earlier days, he may have had good reason for his belief that the schoolmaster is sometimes as useless as the parson. But it was hardly wise to base a general principle on his own example in both callings.

¹ The ignorance of the Colonial Office was displayed in a remarkable manner. It was necessary to make out letters-patent appointing the first Bishop of New Zealand in 1841; but by an extraordinary blunder his diocese was defined as stretching from 50° South Latitude to 34°

consideration that as Wakefield had already selected the most central spot for the capital, any other site selected by the Colonial Office must necessarily be less central and therefore less convenient for the colony.

Captain Hobson, the agent for the British Government, did his best in the circumstances. The place that he selected for the city of Auckland,¹ the official capital of Auckland, 1840. New Zealand, was at the head of a noble harbour, or rather a series of harbours, formed by the junction of a number of rivers which ran together as the fingers of the hand into the palm. It was situated in the north island, in 'the centre of the bulk of the native population, now British subjects,' whom Captain Hobson rather hastily assumed to be rapidly adopting 'European habits, and acquiring a taste for our manufactures.'

As the headquarters of the administration, Auckland naturally possessed an importance which it would otherwise hardly have attained. After a couple of years of life it boasted its nineteen hundred citizens, a figure which doubled in the next decade; and if occasional regrets were expressed that an economical administration had not yet seen fit to build a Government House in the town, the august presence of the Governor himself was a legitimate mark of superiority over other cities.

North Latitude, instead of *South* Latitude. This error gave the Bishop spiritual jurisdiction over practically the whole Pacific Ocean.

I believe a similar mistake was made in South America, where an Anglican bishop was appointed to Guiana instead of British Guiana, with the result that he could claim, if he so chose, jurisdiction in French and Dutch Guiana as well as the British colony.

¹ A good account of Auckland was published anonymously in 1853. All the contemporary statements regarding the old capital which emanated from Wellington, Dunedin, or Canterbury must be received with extreme caution. They are about as impartial as a biography of the Archangel Michael would be from the pen of Beelzebub.

As an instance of the jealousy between Wellington and Auckland, it is recorded that when Selwyn decided to fix his episcopal seat at Auckland, he was informed by the people of the older and more central city that by them he would be 'coldly looked upon as the main prop of a rival settlement.'—Tucker's *Selwyn*.

Nor was this Auckland's only distinction. A warship was stationed in the harbour, and some soldiers quartered in the town, whose chief duty appears to have been to give a weekly concert to the appreciative inhabitants. Within a few months of its foundation, Auckland likewise possessed a hospital, a barracks, and a prison ; and the essentials of civilisation being thus provided for, religion was also not forgotten. The first Anglican bishop of New Zealand made Auckland his spiritual capital, and founded there a college for the training of British and Maori youth in theology and general studies ; the rival presence of Presbyterian and Wesleyan churches demonstrated that the Protestant right of private judgment had lost none of its vigour in the antipodes.

There was, it was claimed, but little party spirit among the people of the capital ; but this was perhaps no considerable virtue, for they kept all their venom for their detested rivals, the citizens of Wellington, as the citizens of Wellington in turn lost no opportunity of calling attention to the extreme inconvenience and remoteness of the situation of Auckland. A kind of verbal vendetta was waged between the two municipalities ; but not all the smiles and favours of the official world could save Auckland from defeat and degradation. It grew, indeed, and prospered, and in time became the centre of an important district ; but it was deposed in 1865 from the position of capital which its founders had usurped for it, and that high dignity was transferred to Wellington. The original choice of the New Zealand Company was thus abundantly justified twenty-five years after its work had been obstructed by the Imperial Government.

With the removal of the capital from Auckland to Wellington, the opening of the first railroad at Canterbury, and the discovery of goldfields about the same time, the first quarter-century of New Zealand's history as a British colony drew to a close.

**The Capital
removed to
Wellington,
1865.**

**New
Zealand
in 1865.**

In that short time the white population had risen, mainly by immigration from Britain, but partly also by natural increase, from about 2000 to 172,158, which was scattered in and around various centres along the coasts of the north and south islands. In addition, there was a small population, possibly two or three thousand all told, but certainly not larger, that was descended from European fathers and Maori mothers, and ranked as European or Maori according to the individual circumstances of its upbringing.¹

Most of these people, who were drawn from every social class in England—younger sons of landowners, sons of country parsonages, unemployed workmen from the towns, farmers and agricultural labourers from the old peasant stock of rural Britain—were prosperous, and had established themselves more firmly in New Zealand than ever they could have done in England. ‘I little thought that ever I should leave my native land,’ wrote one settler; ‘but I hope it is all for the best; for now I have got a house of my own, and a garden.’ ‘Dear father,’ another sent word back to the old home, ‘this is a beautiful country, I should say one of the finest in the world; I do not think that England was ever so good for cultivation as this.’²

¹ I can find no authentic case of progeny from the union of a European woman and a Maori man. Such unions may have occurred, but they must have been extremely rare.

² *Letters from Settlers and Labouring Emigrants* (1843); *Latest Information from New Plymouth*. Another epistle of this time may be quoted in full: ‘Dear Farther, I right this few to you, hoping to find you all well as it leaves us at preasant. We were trubbled very much with flies and grasshoppers, for they eat up everything as i plant out. I shall never think of coming to England whilst i can get plenty of pork, for you are worse off than our convicts. Please to send me plenty of garden seeds, scarlet runners, rubbub roots. Please to tell all young men and their wives to come to New Zealand for they will soon get fatt as hogs. Tell my uncle Cogger I am happy as the days is long, and my wife and children, for they are got quite fat already, thanks to God for everything. Henry Wouldon. Amen.’ This emigrant’s paths, like those of the psalmist, seem to have dropped fatness.

The profits of the farmer were often good, but life was generally comfortable rather than luxurious. Selwyn, the first bishop of the colony, waxed enthusiastic over the peaceful pastoral existence, and the sight of 'mutton flourishing with Homeric fat, and juicy apples, and foaming jugs of milk.'¹ If the soil was almost everywhere fertile, the lack of any large market at which perishable produce could be sold prevented any great accumulation of wealth except among the sheep-breeders, who formed an aristocracy of squatters, and who could always ship their wool to England. But even the sheep-breeders, whose flocks multiplied enormously on the magnificent plains of New Zealand, and who had not to struggle with periodic drought—that terrible handicap on the Australian farmer—had to reckon with the fact that labour was everywhere scarce, and therefore highly paid. The high price of labour, in fact, deterred all but the wealthier settlers from employing many workmen on their estates, with the excellent result that men had to work their own farms, and the absurd prejudice against physical and manual labour that has been the ruin of so many communities took no hold in New Zealand.²

In New Plymouth, for instance, wages ran at about 5s. to 7s. 6d. a day; at Dunedin a labourer received 3s. a day, and a mechanic from 5s. to 7s. Other settlements appear to have averaged about the same; and these rates, although they would have been considered extraordinarily high in England at that time, where the conditions of labour were miserably inadequate, were not too much to provide a married man and a family with more than the necessities and decencies of life in New Zealand.

Prices on the whole were high. In Wellington in 1843

¹ In *London Times*, 19th December 1849.

² It would easily have taken root had the opportunity presented. 'Do you mean to say a gentleman is to learn how to give a drench to a cow?' was the disgusted question of one emigrant who had hoped to play at pioneering.

bread was 3½d. the pound avoirdupois, and beef 1s. 2d. to 1s. 4d.; in New Plymouth flour was 4½d. the pound, but beef and pork were sold at 7½d. In Dunedin the charges were somewhat lower, bread being 10d. the four pound loaf, beef 7d. the pound; a sheep cost from 20s. to 28s., about the same as at Canterbury; a cow could be bought from £12, 10s. to £15, and mares at £20 to £30.

But the standard of life was altogether higher for the working classes in New Zealand than in England, and in some cases, perhaps, rather lower for those who derived **Social Conditions.** from the middle and upper ranks of society. And no leisured class existed which could devote itself to literature and the arts; nearly all were active physical workers, toiling for the more elemental needs of society. Man has to conquer the earth before he can sing of his victory.

'The academic life of a colony,' said Selwyn, 'is to work when you must, and to read when you can.' But if the tree of culture produced not such exquisite flowers in New Zealand as in Europe, it certainly produced more blossom in proportion to its size. The higher standard of life and the better conditions that were possible for the labourer in the antipodes soon resulted in a stirring of mental curiosity. He was no longer a drudge, as he had too often remained in England; but like a plant that has been moved from a gloomy ditch to a garden full of sunshine, he thrived and expanded under the more kindly conditions of the new life.

Socially, New Zealand showed a marked resemblance to Britain in most of its habits. In any case, there had not yet been time for divergences of manners to develop, for specialised characteristics never appear in colonies before the coming of a generation native to the soil. And since the climate—which influences human customs and observances far more deeply than is usually recognised—resembled that of Britain in being moist, equable, and oceanic, there was not even in later years to be the same differentiation between the

British in their old home and the British in New Zealand as there was among the same people in the dry continental climate of Australia.

In their failings, indeed, as well as in their virtues, the British in New Zealand still adhered to the traditions of the old country. Every traveller who visited the colony commented on the vast amount of drunkenness in each and all of the settlements; and their evidence is corroborated by private letters, by statistics, and the records of the courts of justice. In the little city of Auckland there were 529 convictions for drunkenness in the year 1847, among a population of not more than 4000. In the early days of Dunedin the revenue amounted to £3400 in eighteen months, of which no less than £1240 was raised from the duty on spirits. One writer mentions the case of a publican who had saved upwards of £2000 from the sale of liquor in fifteen months; another declared that there was a far greater tendency to drunkenness in Canterbury than in England, which was anything but a sober country at that time.¹

Well might an old settler declare that 'the spirits in New Zealand is killing the men.'² Those who were solitary found company in the bottle; those who had human comradeship pledged each other in drink. Only the hard open-air life minimised the evil; but it is at least possible that the strict temperance policy of later days in New Zealand derived some of its strength from a remembrance of, and a revulsion against, the alcoholic excesses of the first settlers.

¹ Bevan's *Narrative of a Voyage* (1841); Butler's *Canterbury Settlement* (1863).

² *Latest from New Plymouth.*

CHAPTER III

THE MAORI WARS: 1840-70

THE early British settlers in New Zealand seem to have ignored or forgotten the bloodthirsty character which every traveller had justly attributed to its aboriginal inhabitants. There was no doubt whatever that the Maories practised cannibalism, that they were as cruel, vindictive, and unstable as other savages, that they often sold their women to the stranger's lust, and sometimes murdered the man who purchased their wives. Yet these things were overlooked when the English colonies were planted, and none foresaw the horrors of barbaric war with tribes which were understood to have adopted Christianity as the rule of life.¹

There was, it is true, another side to the Maori character ; but this was unknown to settler and missionary, who would have been surprised and probably disconcerted had they realised that the soft musical language of their neighbours was as rich as the soil of the country, and that it expressed a rude philosophy of life and a poetry of earth and men which rivalled the older mythologies of Europe. Of the past history of the natives of New Zealand the European immigrants knew little ; but the Maories had wandered at large over the vast spaces of the Pacific for unknown generations before some instinct led them southwards to a settled home ; and they had not passed from isle to isle without learning something of the beauty and terror of nature and life in sun-

¹ One exception may be made. In the *Colonial Magazine*, 1843, is the following from a white settler : 'I am confident ere long a collision will take place. The Maories think the whites afraid of them, and begin to have the highest contempt for them.'

shine and cyclone, battle and love, birth and fruition and death.¹

Environed by an ocean whose bounds were mystery, and whose voice an ever-changing music, an ocean which created and caressed and destroyed its children, the Maori Some Maori Traditions. had learned to believe in an unseen world, a world of wonder and dreams. Heaven in his vision had been one with his bride the earth before the coming of man ; but even the god who was father of man had striven in vain to part earth and sky, the parents of all the gods, from one another. Only Tane-mahuta, the god of forests and birds and insects, could rend the two ; and from the day of that catastrophe the Maori legend taught that heaven and earth, bridegroom and spouse, were separated. But their mutual love remained ; heaven mourned his bride through long nights of sorrow, dropping sweet tears upon her loving bosom, which men call the dew ; earth, also, lamented ever the loss of her beloved, and the sighs which she breathed her children named the mists of the morning.

Their offspring, too, were divided. The god and father of human beings, the god of reptiles, and the god of food held fast to the breasts of their mother the earth ; but the god of storms abode with his father in the skies, whence he emerged to sweep the earth with swift gusts of his anger, jealous lest she should grow too beautiful.

Now the sons of earth, who rejoiced in their mother's beauty, desired the daughters of heaven to wife. And a daughter of heaven came to one among them, and conceived a child ; but when the father saw that heaven had sent him

¹ See Grey's *Polynesian Mythology* and *Maori Mementoes* ; also *Old New Zealand*, by a Pakeha Maori ; Izett's *Maori Lore*, and White's *Ancient History of the Maori*.

Most of the contemporary English writers during the wars are strongly prejudiced against the Maories, except the missionaries and Selwyn ; since then a reaction has set in, of which Rusden's lengthy and interesting but excessively anti-white *History of New Zealand* is the most extreme phase.

a girl and not a son, he disliked it and was angry. And his bride of the sky was sorrowful and bitter against her husband, and fled with her daughter back to heaven ; but her husband now sought her endlessly with charm and incantation, for absence made him love the child, until he too mounted up to heaven. And having found them he returned no more to earth, but lived in heaven for ever. And the proof of this is that when he walks above, his footsteps are heard of men to this day, and they call his footsteps thunder.

Love made this man immortal ; but other men must submit to die, for Maui, the youngest son of earth and heaven, who sought to know whether man should die or live for ever, was killed and devoured by his ancestress, the goddess of Death. Had man been immortal, Death would herself have died when she devoured her kinsman. And the proof of this is that Death still lives and devours men every day, while no man lives for ever.

These and many other legends the Maori held in veneration ; and they had traditions, handed down from father to son, fixing the generation of their migration to New Zealand.¹

But the ancient lore that had gathered beauty and fragrance from long wanderings up and down the Pacific, native legends that echoed old tragedies of sunlit islands in a silent sea, stories of dead warriors fighting through a bloody night with mysterious enemies who drifted off at dawn to other worlds, songs of soft atoll maidens sorrowing for love and slain lovers—all were passing. The Maori himself was passing from a changing land, himself not unchanged by contact with another race.

For the hand of death was upon this people, death tempered

¹ They also had a legend that their god Maui, the youngest son of earth and heaven, had brought New Zealand up from the bottom of the sea one day when he was fishing. The idea was natural to a native of the Pacific, where so many of the islands rise sheer out of the depths.

with the promise of eternal life which the white man brought. The children died in the mission schools, too sickly plants to grow in Christian soil.¹ The terrible native wars and cannibal feasts of the older time were now reinforced by new diseases—tuberculosis, syphilis, and measles—imported from Europe; alcohol and suicide added their quota of victims.

Decline
of the
Maories.

Even the souls as well as the bodies of the Maories seemed to be dying. The old heathen faith, the natural outcome of the Maori intellect, had been uprooted by Christianity; but the new and alien creed, strange as it was to the natives of New Zealand alike in its philosophy and its imagery, had not established itself firmly. There had been many disappointments for the missionaries in their work, and the second generation of Maori Christians was even less promising than the first. The people themselves seemed to have lost the faculty of belief; many 'had utterly set aside Christianity and taken up nothing instead, but dote upon the vices of the towns, and horses, and whale-fishing.'² And some years later a Maori frankly confessed to a white visitor why he had abandoned his belief. 'At one time,' he said, 'I thought there were two saints in the island, and I waited a long time to see if they would be taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire. But now I think there are no saints, in heaven or in earth.' And the native's wife admitted even more frankly the materialism that had followed the abandonment of the old faith and the new. 'We believe in nothing here,' she said, 'and get fat on pork and potatoes.'³

The hopeless materialism of that answer is a searching comment on the change wrought by contact with the white man; but it is true that there was gain as well as loss in the change.

¹ British House of Commons Papers, 1837, Report of Government Agent. The same thing had occurred in Tasmania (bk. xviii. ch. i.).

² Tucker's *Life of Bishop Selwyn*.

³ Kerry-Nicholls' *The King Country; Explorations in New Zealand* (1884).

The Maories were now beginning to live in better houses, and in more sanitary conditions than of old; they were no longer cannibals,¹ and they had proved that they could work as well as kill. They had been employed in road-making in many parts of the north island, and the mails between Auckland and Wellington were regularly carried by the natives.²

But these things profited them little when the race was dying; a better house is useless to a dead tenant. And the numbers of the Maories were steadily diminishing; their country itself no longer belonged to them. **The Land Sales.** The sales of land to the white man had begun with the coming of the missionaries; they continued with individual speculators before the annexation by Britain, and proceeded steadily with every settlement scheme of the New Zealand Company. Four hundred thousand acres, for instance, were sold for the colony at Dunedin for £2400, an average price of three halfpence an acre, which the Company afterwards sold at £2 an acre—a sufficiently generous profit on the transaction. For the Canterbury settlement, also, two million four hundred thousand acres had been sold; and these were but the more conspicuous instances in the process of transference.

In this wholesale fashion the Maories were parting with their country; but they were as ready to sell as the British to buy. They gave no sign that they were dissatisfied with the bargains they had made; and the first British Governor in New Zealand, prejudiced as he was against the private

¹ The missionaries had much to do with stamping out cannibalism. Perhaps another reason for the decline was due to the fact that the Maories found European flesh salt and unpalatable, while that of their own people was very sweet (Hope Blake's *Sixty Years in New Zealand*). The proverbial toughness of the Britisher seems to have stood him in good stead.

It is stated, however, that the chronic alcoholism of many of the white traders in the South Seas made them bad eating. (Romilly's *From my Verandah in New Guinea*.) Hard drinking as a form of life assurance is a novelty.

² Hursthouse's *New Plymouth*. For road-making they were paid two shillings and sixpence and three shillings a day.

purchasers, admitted that they had treated the natives fairly even at the height of the mania for speculation in land.¹

The bargains may have been fair ; the Maories may have been contented at the time with the exchange of guns or blankets or gold for their rich black soil and rushing rivers ; but sooner or later they were bound to discover that they had sold their birthright. An ancient proverb of the race warned them that ‘ From food is man’s blood formed, and it is land which grows his food and sustains him. Never part with your land.’ Too late the Maories remembered the warning and discovered the truth of the saying ; but remembrance and warning alike brought many years of trouble to New Zealand.

The early British adventurers had bought the land from the Maori chiefs for the best terms they could, and sometimes trouble came on that account ; for the chiefs had not the right to sell land that, in the Maori view, was the property of the whole tribe, and could therefore only be alienated by consent of the whole tribe.² But when the British Government annexed New Zealand in 1840 an entirely new principle was introduced, which found expression in the Treaty of Waitangi, concluded on 6th February of that year, between Captain Hobson and the Maori chiefs at Waitangi on the Bay of Islands.

The Treaty
of Wait-
angi, 1840.

This treaty ran as follows :—

‘ Her Majesty Queen Victoria, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, regarding with her royal favour the native chiefs and tribes of New Zealand, and anxious to protect their

¹ Hobson’s words are important enough to quote: ‘ The passion for land-jobbing pervades every class ; all considerations appear absorbed in that one object. Tracts of country, in some cases of five hundred square miles, are claimed by single individuals ; and it not unfrequently occurs in the late purchases that very fair equivalents have been given to the natives for their possessions. They have proved quite as ready to sell their lands as the Europeans to buy.’—*Official Correspondence relative to New Zealand*, published 11th May 1841.

² The principle was precisely the same as that which prevailed among the clans of the Scottish Highlands.

just rights and property, and to secure to them the enjoyment of peace and good order, has deemed it necessary, in consequence of the great number of Her Majesty's subjects who have already settled in New Zealand, and the rapid extension of emigration both from Europe and Australia which is still in progress, to constitute and appoint a functionary properly authorized to treat with the aborigines of New Zealand for the recognition of Her Majesty's sovereign authority over the whole or any part of those islands. Her Majesty, therefore, being desirous to establish a settled form of civil government, with a view to avert the evil consequences which must result from the absence of the necessary laws and institutions, alike to the native population and her subjects, has been graciously pleased to empower and authorize me, William Hobson, a Captain in Her Majesty's Royal Navy, Consul, and Lieutenant-Governor of such parts of New Zealand as may be or hereafter shall be ceded to Her Majesty, to concur in the following articles and conditions.

'Article 1.—The chiefs of the Confederation of the united tribes of New Zealand, and the separate and independent chiefs who have not become members of the Confederation, cede to Her Majesty the Queen of England, absolutely and without reservation, all the rights and powers of sovereignty which the said Confederation or individual chiefs respectively exercise or possess, or may be supposed to exercise or to possess, over their respective territories as the sole sovereigns thereof.

'Article 2.—Her Majesty the Queen of England confirms and guarantees to the chiefs and tribes of New Zealand, and to the respective families and individuals thereof, the full, exclusive, and undisturbed possession of lands and estates, forests, fisheries, and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess, so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession; but the chiefs of the united tribes and the individual chiefs yield to Her Majesty the exclusive right of pre-emption over such lands as the proprietors thereof may be disposed to alienate, at such prices as may be agreed upon between the respective proprietors and persons appointed by Her Majesty to treat with them on that behalf.

'Article 3.—In consideration thereof, Her Majesty the Queen of England extends to the natives of New Zealand her royal protection, and imparts to them all the rights and privileges of British subjects.

(Signed) W. HOBSON,
Lieut.-Governor.'

Now therefore we, the chiefs of the Confederation of the united tribes of New Zealand, being assembled in congress at Victoria, in Waitangi, and we, the separate and independent chiefs of New Zealand, claiming authority over the tribes and territories which are specified after our respective names, having been made fully to understand the provisions of the foregoing treaty, accept and enter into the same in the full spirit and meaning thereof. In witness of which we have attached our signatures or marks at the places and dates respectively specified.

Dated at Waitangi, this 6th day of February, in the year of our Lord 1840.¹

(512 signatures.)

This important treaty, which some professed to regard as the Magna Charta of the natives of New Zealand, was singularly unfortunate in its phrasing and consequences. It is true that it gave the Maories the rights of British subjects—rights which savages in the antipodes neither valued nor understood. It is likewise true that it gave them the royal protection—at least nominally, for no British troops were yet sent to New Zealand, and the Maories understood not the procedure of British courts of law—but it was also construed as taking possession, in the name of the Crown, of all waste and uncultivated lands in New Zealand, entirely without compensation; and it stopped all private sales of land then in contemplation or under negotiation.

The treaty may have been the Magna Charta of the Maories, but it was a charter that destroyed their independence in return for the promise of a protection which they needed not, and which in fact was never given. The chiefs who put their names at the foot of the treaty were no longer sovereigns but subjects; and it was not long before those other chiefs

¹ I have transcribed the treaty from the official translation. It will be noted that Victoria is designated Queen of the United Kingdom in one clause, and Queen of England in another. In the Maori version she is called Queen of England throughout. Probably no Scotsman of the time understood the Maori tongue sufficiently well to protest.

who had opposed the treaty from the beginning could claim that their fears were justified.

It soon became evident, too, that the treaty had aggravated rather than solved the land question. Every new purchase of land now led to fresh difficulties and friction, and the growing ill-feeling was hardly diminished by the official enquiry which took place in 1841, and which disallowed some purchases and recognised others.¹

For a time, however, no actual force was used on either side, although Hobson had foreseen from the beginning that 'it would require a strong executive supported by the military'² to control the country. But no troops were sent to support the governor or the colonists; the British settlers, with their usual fatal optimism, undervalued the fighting

¹ Maori lands were often confiscated by the Colonial Government during the ensuing thirty years, sometimes in very large blocks, as a penalty for acts of rebellion. The legality of this could not be disputed; but the legal form made little difference to the aborigines, to whom the ownership of the land was of far more importance than the legality of the procedure by which they were dispossessed. And, in any case, they could not have been condemned as rebels had they not first been British subjects; and it was the Treaty of Waitangi which made them British subjects.

But the most serious cause of disaffection was the instruction given by the Imperial Government in 1846 that 'the exclusive title of the Crown to all unoccupied or waste lands' must henceforth be admitted. The Treaty contained not a word on this subject; six years were allowed to elapse before that interpretation was put upon it; and the Maories could hardly be blamed for not knowing the British doctrine regarding Crown and waste lands in the colonies. It is perfectly true that instructions were given at the same time that the Treaty should be 'most scrupulously and religiously observed.' But it will hardly be maintained that the best way to observe a treaty scrupulously is to place an entirely unexpected interpretation on it six years after it has been signed. The Maories regarded the whole of New Zealand, whether actually inhabited by them or not, as their own, just as an Englishman regards the large uncultivated acreage of England as a part of his own country. Had the Treaty of Waitangi been intended to alienate the waste lands, a clause should have been inserted to that effect in the original document.

I may remark here that several years later Governor Bowen suggested that all the trouble with the Maories would have been avoided had a native province been set apart for their exclusive possession. But it is very doubtful whether the tribes, who were scattered through the country, would have agreed to a wholesale removal.

² *Official Correspondence*, 1841.

capacity of the aborigines, believing the Maories obsessed by 'an almost superstitious dread' of encountering the white soldiers whom they had never seen ;¹ and Captain Fitzroy, who succeeded Hobson as Governor of New Zealand, cherished the fond delusion that he could rule a race of warriors by moral influence in the absence of physical force.

That delusion was soon shattered ; indeed, the first ominous signs of future trouble had already stained the black earth crimson before Fitzroy arrived. For in the year 1843 the Maories had disputed a purchase of land at Wairau by the settlers in the Nelson district, and no notice was taken of their protest. A surveyor was sent to map out the place, and his hut was burnt by the angry tribe. A small party then left Nelson to arrest the chief, Te Kauparaha, on a charge of arson, but one of that party fired at and killed the chief's daughter. The episode was almost certainly accidental, but there is no room for accidents at a critical moment. The enraged and injured chief attacked the intruders, and nine of their number were slain.

The Wairau
Massacre,
1843.

So opened the first war between Maori and Briton, in a hasty act, an unhappy accident, and a piece of human revenge.

The petty quarrel gave 'a shock which vibrated through the length and breadth of the land,' reported Fitzroy ; the people of Nelson appealed to Britain to protect those who were 'leading the forlorn hope of civilisation' in a strange land, but no protection came. And Fitzroy held that the British were the aggressors at Wairau, and pardoned the murderers.² There can be no doubt that his lenity was construed as timidity by the Maories ; and although the official who was known as Chief Protector of the Aborigines

¹ Collinson's *Military Operations*.

² See *The Late Massacre at Wairau, a Letter to the Earl of Devon* (1843), for the settlers' standpoint, and Fitzroy's *Remarks on New Zealand* for the Governor's defence. His whole book is full of the excellent reasons which a weak man can always find for doing nothing.

assured him that the permanent peace of the islands was assured, another outbreak soon followed.

For some years past a scattered community of white traders, missionaries, and whalers had been settled among the natives at Kororareka on the beautiful Bay of Islands. They numbered about a thousand, and Hobson had debated the claims of the place to be the capital of New Zealand before he decided on Auckland ; but although rejected as the administrative headquarters, and deserted by the whalers on account of the customs duties imposed by the new Government, Kororareka still remained an important centre of trade and religious propaganda.

Now the Maories in that neighbourhood were ruled by Honi Hiki, a powerful chief who had married a daughter of Hongi, the celebrated leader whose aim it had been to reduce all the tribes of New Zealand under his sway. Honi Hiki seems to have possessed some of the ambition of his father-in-law, and while not unfriendly to the British settlers,¹ he hated the British Government as the author of the treaty which had destroyed Maori independence. The flagstaff which that Government had erected at the Bay of Islands was the emblem, the insulting emblem as Honi Hiki thought, of British sovereignty, and its fluttering presence irked him. Encouraged by his own people and by American traders at the Bay, he cut the flagstaff down on 8th July 1844, and thereby proclaimed his rebellion.

‘It has neither bones nor blood, and can feel no pain,’ said the chief as the act was done ; and when the flagstaff was again erected, it was cut down a second and a third time.

But the third time a small force of British soldiers was

¹ Four European settlers and a half-caste child had been murdered by the natives at the Bay of Islands some years before. (Hobson to Secretary of State, 16th December 1841.) But there is nothing to show that Honi Hiki was responsible for an act which was not unparalleled in a rather lawless community. And he was particularly well affected to the missionaries at the Bay.

encountered by the natives and repulsed. Their defeat taught the Maories that white troops were not invincible; and once that dangerous lesson was learned, it was not forgotten.

It was now seen that the European settlement at Kororareka was defenceless, and the place was sacked and burnt by the Maories. The white colonists, however, were spared and sent across the dense forest inlands to Auckland, for Honi Hiki was a chivalrous foe, who fought the Government and not the people. 'Let us die for the country that God has given us,' he said, 'but we will fight men and not women.'

The arrival of the refugees at Auckland created a panic in that little capital. Many who feared for their lives hurriedly sailed for Australia. A militia was hastily formed, but the defensive resources of the place were at best contemptible. There was 'neither fortification, nor defensible position, nor place of shelter or refuge for women and children, nor four hundred serviceable muskets; and the whole military force consisted of one company of seventy-eight men,' reported Fitzroy; while the revenue was so small that he had no money to spend even on ammunition.

When the true facts of the situation at last dawned on the unhappy governor who had hoped to rule a warrior race by moral force, he remarked with a sarcasm that touched himself as well as the Government which had appointed him, that 'the just and humane views of England might have been carried out better by an authority possessing some real power, supported by adequate naval and military force. Too much reliance had been placed on the friendly feelings of the natives, and too much confidence in their religious feelings.'¹ Fitzroy should have discovered that before; he had misjudged the position as badly as the

¹ See Fitzroy's *Remarks*; Collinson's *Military Operations*; Buller's *Forty Years in New Zealand*; Hope Blake's *Sixty Years in New Zealand*.

imperial authorities, and with less excuse, since he was on the spot and they were on the other side of the world.

His recall brought an abler and a stronger man on the scene. Sir George Grey had already saved South Australia in an industrial crisis ; he was now instructed to save New Zealand from a deadly racial feud.

There could have been no better man for the post than he whose name was to become inseparably associated with New Zealand during many years of public leadership and private residence. Grey knew, indeed, at that time but little of the character of the Maories ; he spoke not their language, he understood not their customs. But he realised the position of affairs more clearly in a week than Fitzroy had done in his whole term of office, and shaped his acts accordingly.

The British settlers were scattered and disorganised, fewer in number than the Maories, and in no position to defend themselves against attacks which had never been anticipated when they founded the colony. The British Government, on the other hand, by reason of its unfortunate quarrel with Wakefield and the New Zealand Company, had placed its capital, not in the centre of the European, but of the aboriginal population, not in the centre of security, but in the very seat of danger. The site of Auckland had been chosen because it was near the Maories—a reason which most of its citizens now saw excellent reasons to regret.

The situation both of the Government and of the colonists was therefore weak, and it was not strengthened by the fact that disreputable British and American traders were still selling arms and ammunition to the Maories even after a state of war prevailed.¹ The Maories, too, were a brave and daring enemy who, if worsted, merely retreated from their fortresses² into the forest ; nor was it possible to reduce

¹ Colonel Despard, *United Service Magazine*, 1846.

² The Maori fortress, which was called a 'pah' in the native tongue, was often of great natural strength, and was invariably built in a well-chosen position. Its peculiar feature was that it was always open at the

them even by sending a British army through the disaffected country, without incurring considerable expense in driving roads through the dense thickets and building bridges over the swift streams of the still unknown interior—an expense which the colonists could not, and the British Government probably would not, bear.

Faced with these difficulties, Grey's first act was prompt and decisive. He called upon all loyal subjects of the Crown to follow him. His bold Policy.

Now every native chief who had signed the Treaty of Waitangi had pledged himself to become a loyal subject of the Crown. Some had fulfilled that pledge; these were truly well-disposed towards the new Government, and ready to assist it against their own people; but the greater number of the Maori chiefs were outwardly neutral, or secretly hostile to the white man. The majority of these had hitherto committed no open act of rebellion, but were quietly watching the course of events before taking sides.

But Grey's action forced them to declare themselves. Compelled to abandon their neutrality, and unwilling to oppose the Governor, whose bold act at once stamped him a strong man, many of the chiefs ranged themselves under his banner, and agreed to march against their countrymen in arms.

A force was quickly raised of about eleven hundred British and four hundred and fifty Maories; the rebel camp at Ruapekapeka was attacked, and although it was defended with splendid bravery against European artillery for eleven days, a breach was at length effected, and the place was stormed on 10th January 1846. Its Success.

Having shown his strength, Grey now decided to show his rear, so as to afford a means of escape into the forest. Before the enemy could come up with the retreating tribe, another 'pah' would be constructed, which sometimes defied every effort, even of European troops.

As an instance of the difficulties attending a regular army operating in the New Zealand forest, it may be mentioned that in the campaign of 1846 it took eleven hundred white men a whole month to march fifteen miles.—Collinson's *Military Operations*.

generosity, assured that it would not be interpreted as weakness by an enemy not lacking in intelligence. He proclaimed a free pardon to the rebels, on condition that they laid down their arms and returned to their allegiance.

The defeat and the pardon together broke the back of the outbreak in the North Island. All the chiefs except Honi Hiki expressed contrition and gratitude; and Hiki himself sent peace-offerings and friendly messages to Grey before the year was out.¹

Another outbreak, which followed near Wellington shortly afterwards, was quickly suppressed; and in 1847 the third and last episode of the first Maori war began and ended.

An English midshipman accidentally killed a native near the Wanganui River; the natives in revenge murdered a European woman and four children. Five of those concerned in the act were handed over by friendly Maories to the Government, and they were executed, after trial by court-martial. A general rising followed in the neighbourhood, whereupon Grey settled down with a small force near Wanganui, and blockaded the river. The rebels in time realised it was impossible to hold out against him, and sued for peace. The treaty concluded between the two forces brought the war to a close on 21st February 1848.

There followed a period of peace and increasing prosperity after the storm. Colonisation, which had been checked during the native troubles, now proceeded apace. The great enterprises at Dunedin and Canterbury were carried out. New districts were opened up in various parts of the islands; British settlers appeared on the rich lands around Hawkes Bay; Napier and other towns were founded, and grew along the broken coasts,² and the

End of the
First War,
1848.

An In-
terlude of
Peace,
1846-60.

¹ Honi Hiki died of tuberculosis four years later.

² Napier soon grew into a flourishing town; but in 1860 it could boast no more than a pilot's hut, a warehouse, and a primitive hotel called the Bird in Hand.—Hope Blake's *Sixty Years in New Zealand*.

older cities progressed as rapidly as the younger. It could no longer be said of Wellington that it was a place whose one street was nearly always a puddle of mud:¹ the whole country, in fact, advanced during these fruitful years—roads, farms, and houses were improved, and the community generally convinced itself that there was no prospect of any future strife.²

For some time, indeed, the peace was maintained almost unbroken, and war in New Zealand was hardly more than an old settler's tale, a memory of pioneering dangers in early days, a bloody page that was read but no longer acted.

But the Maories, although diminishing in numbers, were still unconquered; the ancient fire of their race was smouldering but not yet extinct. And the very expansion of the British in New Zealand now served as a steady draught through every native household which fanned the shrinking embers of racial discord once more into flame. Each new acre that was occupied by Europeans meant an acre less for the Maories; each new field laid out to pasture or put in crop strengthened the hold of the whites over the historic heritage of the aborigines.

Cause of
the Second
War.

In time all must be lost to the Maories if the process continued. 'Can you stay the surf that beats on Wanganui shore?' asked the natives in despair as they saw one ship after another deposit its load of peaceful white settlers on the New Zealand coast; but at least they had the spirit to make a second fight for it before they died. And if their numbers were now considerably smaller than before, they were otherwise better equipped for a struggle than in Fitzroy's day. In their own country, and fighting under their own conditions, they were still the better men—not braver indeed than the whites, but more crafty, capable of quicker movements, and with a fuller knowledge of the available means of attack and retreat. 'Arms they had, ammunition they

¹ Hope Blake.

² Collinson's *Military Operations*.

could steal, and blockade was useless with enemies who live on fern-root,' wrote one who visited New Zealand during this second war. 'When they found we burnt their pahs, they ceased to build them; when we brought up howitzers, they went where no howitzers could follow.'¹ The dense forests and morasses of the interior were still their protection; no regular army could follow them thither, and only by driving roads through the bush could they be located. They had therefore all their old advantages except the weight of numbers; and to compensate for that they were now armed, as they had not been before, with the best European rifles, which they could fire with as deadly an aim as the whites.²

The real weakness of the Maories was still, as it had always been, that there was no cohesion among the tribes. Some were openly friendly to the whites, some secretly hostile, but unwilling to take part in a native revolt; even among those which were ready to fight there was little idea of combined military action. Nor had any native leader yet arisen among them with sufficient strength of purpose to dominate their divided counsels. Forty years earlier Hongi had tried and failed to make himself supreme ruler of the Maories; the second attempt under Tī Waharoa, which became known as the King Movement, likewise failed in the end, although for a while it gained some influence, many adherents, and a distinct measure of minor success.

Tī Waharoa was an able and ambitious Maori chief who contrived to draw political lessons from the religious teaching of the Christian missionaries which those excellent pastors were far from expecting or approving. While they were extolling the virtues of submission and humility which were inculcated in the New Testament, their pupil studied the

¹ Dilke's *Greater Britain*.

² Hope Blake's *Sixty Years in New Zealand*.

more virile traditions of the older revelation ; and his researches in the inspired literature of the ancient Hebrews were not in vain.

The tribal politics of the early Israelites in Palestine were not altogether dissimilar from those of the Maories in the antipodes, and Tī Waharoa was able to justify the nationalist movement which he headed in the North Island of New Zealand by an apt citation from the Jewish Pentateuch. 'One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee ; thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother,'¹ was the injunction which Tī Waharoa selected from the sacred text for practical application to his own people ; and while the stranger was evidently the British invader of the Maori territory, the king was as clearly the native chief who quoted the Scriptures to such good purpose.

The King Movement in its earlier stages was political, and anti-European rather than anti-Christian ; in its later stages it was distinctly and even fanatically religious and anti-Christian. The Hau-Hau Movement, as this second development was called from the rousing war-cry of the tribes, was a severe test of the missionaries' work, before which many failed to keep their faith. Hundreds of the converts to Christianity, as Bishop Selwyn had seen long before, were still pagans at heart, and these deserted with alacrity a religion they had never understood. Hundreds more could not resist the ties of race and blood in a conflict with the white man ; these too left the evangelists in the second Maori war. Others, again, threw off the mantle of civilisation they had donned for a different reason ; these were attracted, and their savage blood was excited by the ghastly exhibition of the heads of murdered white settlers in the Maori camps, heads which were now supposed to have become the mouthpieces of the native gods, and to convey

The
Hau-Hau
Movement.

¹ Deut. xvii. 15.

encouragement to the leaders and the warriors in a religious war. ¹

As early as the year 1855 it became evident that trouble was again brewing between native and white settler. Ill-
The feeling arose over the purchase of land in the
Taranaki Taranaki district; outrages were committed,
Outbreak, perhaps by both sides, and when Selwyn endea-
1855. voured to make peace he was reviled by Maori and Briton
 alike. The natives jeered at him, and told him to 'go and
 take service with his bloodshedding children'; the whites
 accused him of 'again lending his blighting influence to
 New Zealand, and taking the murderers by the hand.' ²

For the time the difficulty was smoothed over. But two
 years later the Maories decided to sell no more lands to the
The Treaty British in the North Island; and in 1859 the
of Waitangi Governor insisted on acquiring a strip of territory
broken, at Waitara, near New Plymouth. The Maories
1859. refused. 'There are three things,' they said, 'we must hold
 to; the Almighty, the King, and the Land.' ³

Here was the direct and fundamental conflict of principle
 that led to the war reduced to its very elements. If the
 Maories would sell no more of their lands—and the Treaty of
 Waitangi explicitly recognised their absolute right to hold
 those lands—the British must either submit to a limited

¹ In the first years of the war the natives seldom attacked the Christian missionaries, who were very generally respected in Maoridom, but the Hau-Hau Movement was as strong against them as the secular settlers. One chief, who killed a missionary in 1865, swallowed the eyes of his victim, saying that one eye was the Queen of England and the other the Parliament. This chief was captured and executed seven years later.

² Tucker's *Life of Selwyn*.

³ For the second Maori war, see Fox's *War in New Zealand*; Thomson's *New Zealand, Past and Present*; Gorst's *The Maori Rising*; Grace's *Sketch of New Zealand War*; Grayling's *The War in Taranaki*; *The Campaign on the West Coast of New Zealand*; Alexander's *The Bush War*; Whitmore's *The Last Maori War*; the *Official Correspondence*; Henderson's *Life of Grey*; Bowen's *Thirty Years*; Gretton's *Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment*. *The Defenders of New Zealand* contains a long series of biographies of those who took part in the war.

occupation of the colony, or break the Treaty and take the lands by force.

The difficulty was not settled even by the reappointment of Sir George Grey as Governor of New Zealand in 1861. His predecessor had seized the land at Waitara, and thereby broken the Treaty of Waitangi, the sacred bond between the two races ; the Maories in revenge had seized a British estate near by. Grey rightly decided that the Maories could not legally be compelled to part with their land to the Government, and he determined to resign Waitara to them on condition that they in turn gave up the British estate which they had occupied. Unhappily he blundered badly in the restoration, seizing the latter before restoring the former ; and the suspicions of the Maories were naturally aroused by this action against the one white man whom they had hitherto been disposed to trust.

Their suspicions were not diminished by the construction of a new military road out of Auckland, and in return they threatened the capital with attack. It was little more than a threat, however, and they were driven inland to the wild country whither no British army could follow.

But they had now no longer any faith in Grey. 'Beware of the wolf,' said the Maori king ; 'the wolf is the Governor who is trying to beguile.' The aborigines still indeed professed their loyalty to the Queen, but they altogether refused to obey the Governor she had appointed, since that Governor had betrayed them at Waitara, and would again entrap them, they believed, if he could, with his soft tongue and pleasant phrases. And they refused henceforth to use the British courts of justice, or to consult the British magistrates, or to send their children to the British schools. The Treaty of Waitangi had been broken, and they could never again trust those who had broken it.

Against this spirit Grey saw it was impossible to prevail. 'I find in many of them a sullen determination,' he wrote, 'to

maintain their government at all costs'; the British ruler could not conciliate, and he had no force adequate to conquer.

And when they were summoned to surrender, the Maories answered, in words of noble defiance that would have wrung admiration from even the most grudging enemy: **The War renewed.** 'This is the word of the Maori; we will fight for ever, and ever, and ever, and the women will fight as well as we.' And again they quoted their own proverb: 'Let us not linger on and die of old age, but let us die as does the shark, fighting to the last.'

From that time war was inevitable.

It is needless to relate every incident in a conflict of petty events and isolated outrages that lasted nearly ten years. The colonial forces were strengthened with imperial troops, but their task in that country was a difficult one, and beyond the capacity of their somewhat indifferent commanders.¹

The army could seldom follow the Maories into their retreats; and on the other hand, the British colonists, scattered as they were and often defenceless, were at the mercy of the aborigines, whose attacks were as sudden and unexpected as the coming of a storm in the tropics. It was a tradition of the Maories that the side which shed the first blood would win the day, and they were usually the party to strike the first blow.² A sudden attack, perhaps by night, on an isolated homestead would nearly always be successful, but at times they were even able to hold their own against the regular imperial troops.

But the moods as well as the methods of the Maories

¹ One of the British generals was derisively called 'the lame sea-gull' by the Maories, from the slowness of his movements and his reluctance to leave the coast for their retreats in the interior.

² The Maories attacked the city of Napier in 1866, and were badly worsted. They attributed their defeat to the fact that they had omitted to slay an English shepherd, the first man who was seen on the day of the fight, and therefore the first blood was drawn by the English.

Their tradition was, of course, no more than an unconscious confession that the attack was stronger than the defence in Maori military tactics.

varied. Sometimes they would tend their captives with almost womanly care, risking their own liberty and even their own lives to fetch water for a prisoner: there were deeds done of that kind in this second war that would have graced any book of Arthurian chivalry. And at other times the savage nature would show at its worst, and the Maories would indulge in fiendish cruelty. In one terrible case that gave a mournful celebrity to Poverty Bay, for example, the natives 'dashed out the brains of a baby against the floor, and after the head had become a pulpy mass, placed it in the arms of the mother before attacking her.'¹ Her husband had already been killed before her eyes.

Sometimes the atrocities, said the shocked Governor under whom the war came to an end, were too horrible for description; nothing more terrible took place even during the Indian Mutiny.² The towns were filled with frightened, destitute women and children, who had come thither for safety and refuge; and men were there too who had lost their homes and years of labour in a night, and had gazed in despair at ruined house and desolate fields before abandoning all to the enemy.

The long continuance and the uncertainty of the desultory war in time made the whole colony irritable and nervous. Harsher methods of dealing with the Maories were soon advocated. 'These bloodthirsty rebels,' said one organ of the New Zealand press in 1868, 'must be shown no mercy. They should be treated as wild beasts, hunted down, and slain. It does not matter what means are employed, so long as the work is done effectually: head-money, blood-money, killing by contract—any of these means may be adopted.'³

To the credit of New Zealand, none of these means were adopted. But the opposition of the Maories was gradually beaten down; and although the war flamed up again in

¹ Bowen's *Thirty Years*.

² *Ibid.*

³ Wellington *Independent*, 10th September 1868.

1864, and added a serious burden to the colony during a financial crisis caused by a fall in the price of wool two years later, it was henceforth only a question of time until the end. The imperial troops were withdrawn as the fighting strength of the Maories dwindled—a step which caused much dissatisfaction in the colony—but after 1867 there were never more than two thousand of the natives in arms.¹

The last embers of the war flickered out in 1870. ‘Victoria is our Queen as well as your Queen,’ cried one of the chiefs as he laid down his arms; and from that time there were no more loyal subjects of the British Empire than the Maories—those at least that were left of that fighting people.

For their numbers had fallen, and fallen, and fallen, in peace and war alike. The total Maori population in 1848, at the close of the first war, was estimated at 100,000.² Ten years later, at the beginning of the second war, it was little more than half that number, being officially calculated at 56,000. By 1868 it was no more than 48,000.

Selwyn, the constant friend of this brave people, deplored their decline, and mourned the melancholy sight of ‘deserted hamlets, where the aged men and women who welcomed us in former years had passed away, leaving no child.’ The lament was true. The old were dying; the adults losing their vigour; the children remained unborn. The Maories had lost their vitality as well as their possessions.

But peace was as deadly as war to the decaying tribes, and civilisation the most fatal of diseases to the uncivilised. Their numbers continued to fall steadily, if more slowly, until

¹ Grey quarrelled with the Imperial Government regarding the conduct of the war, and was relieved of his office in 1868. He was not again employed by the authorities, but his connection with New Zealand was resumed after a short break. See ch. iv.

² The estimate was probably exaggerated, but the decrease among the Maories during the next decade is beyond doubt.

at the close of the nineteenth century they were under forty thousand, all told.¹

‘Our race is gone like the Moa,’ said the Maories, comparing themselves sadly to the extinct ostrich of the islands; the coming of the white man had been the doom of the brown. They were vanishing from the earth; and the very name of Waitangi, where they had signed the treaty which placed their lands and themselves under British sovereignty, a name which in the Maori tongue signifies weeping water, was taken as prophetic of the blood and tears that were shed in the unhappy days when they were being dispossessed of their ancient heritage.

CHAPTER IV

UNION AND EXPANSION: 1870-1911

As the prolonged struggle with the Maories died down, the arrival of white settlers in New Zealand, which had never entirely ceased even during the native wars, again became steady and continuous. But henceforth there was a change in the method of colonisation. The New Zealand Company, which had founded the first British communities on the islands, was dead, and no kindred body took its place. No more large schemes of land purchase and settlement were directed from England after the planting of Canterbury in 1850; the Government of New Zealand itself undertook the management and development of its territories. The change was a sign that another British colony had passed successfully through the accidents of childhood, and was now strong enough to brave the storms of adolescence with a vigorous confidence in its destinies.

**The Growth
of Popula-
tion.**

¹ Their numbers appeared to rise in the first years of the twentieth century, but it was believed that this was due to a more thorough system of enumeration by the census officials, not to any actual increase.

Accidents, indeed, there had been, and storms there were yet to be, but the immigration policy of the New Zealand Government for many years ahead was as active as it was daring. The population of European descent in the islands in February 1871 was 256,000, a figure which represented a large increase during the previous seven years; but a new system was inaugurated in 1870 by the Colonial Ministry, which had the effect of attracting settlers in still more considerable numbers than before. Within the next decade the population almost doubled; by 1901 the country contained 772,000 inhabitants, and in 1911 it totalled 1,008,000.

The idea which was of such tremendous effect in the development of New Zealand was known briefly as the Public Building a Works and Immigration Policy, and it may be **New Nation.** regarded as the first step in an organised and progressive scheme that left its mark deep on the history of the country, both in its immediate consequences and its ultimate unforeseen results.

Its essentials so far as immigration were concerned were that the New Zealand Government granted to such men and their wives and families as were approved by the Agent-General of that Government in England either a free or an assisted passage from England to New Zealand, and subsequently advised and even helped them on their arrival in the antipodes.¹ By this means the New Zealand Government were able to keep a firm hand on the development of the colony, assisting useful citizens, rejecting unsatisfactory applicants, and checking with more and more persistent emphasis the influx of any alien elements that were considered undesirable in a British community.

At first the policy seems to have been nothing more than a natural and laudable desire to develop a fertile country

¹ Assisted immigration as a regular policy was withdrawn after 1890; but for years afterwards provision was made for paying part of the cost of the voyage in certain recommended cases.

in the best possible manner by using only the best materials that could be obtained ; but in time it became, in New Zealand as in Australia, a conscious experiment in nation-building that was tried in peculiarly favourable soil, owing to the isolation of both countries from the rest of the world.¹

The guiding principles underlying this experiment were the same in New Zealand as in Australia : a determination to keep the country a white man's country, to avoid racial questions by discouraging or even prohibiting the entrance of non-European immigrants, and, by encouraging immigrants of British, or at least of European descent, to secure that the new-comers should mix freely and associate on equal terms with the older settlers, and take their share in the government of the country and the upbuilding of a new English nation.

The statistics and the public sentiment of the early twentieth century unite in showing how thoroughly that determination was carried out. The definitely British character of the community was, indeed, even more pronounced in New Zealand than in Australia. Out of a total population of 772,000 in 1901, no fewer than 111,000 had been born in England, nearly 48,000 in Scotland, and over 43,000 in Ireland. Some 4000 proclaimed themselves of German origin, the most easily soluble type of nationality in the colonial field ; nearly 2000 were Austrians, mainly Poles and Ruthenians from Galicia. In addition, there were 5540 half-castes, children of European fathers and Maori mothers ; and, despite all efforts of New Zealand statesmen to keep them out of the country by poll-tax and restrictive laws, the islands contained 2762 Chinese.

Rather more than half a million, about three-fourths of the entire population, had been born in New Zealand itself, and these were almost invariably the children of British immi-

¹ See bk. xxii. for the policy of selection and exclusion in regard to Australasian immigration.

grants of the first generation. The great bulk of the population was therefore British in blood and sympathy, whether it derived from the older generation of the New Zealand Company in England, or the new generation of the New Zealand Government in the antipodes. And both generations have their proper and distinctive share in the history of the islands. The first determined the sites of the cities, marked out the boundaries of the provinces, built the roads, ploughed the fields, and established a civilisation on virgin soil. The second, as healthy, strong, and active as the first, mostly young in years on its arrival, exercised an important influence on the political as well as the industrial development of New Zealand.

It was new blood in a community whose past had already begun to stereotype its views in certain directions. The new-comers had no bitter memories of the native wars to hinder friendly relations with the Maories. And whereas the older settlements had been homogeneous bodies—Presbyterians in Dunedin, Anglicans in Canterbury, Devonians in New Plymouth, officials in Auckland—with a tendency to exclusive and sectional sympathies, and jealous of the prosperity of a rival settlement, the new-comers were heterogeneous in character, and disposed to look on the local patriotism of their predecessors as petty and rather trivial. The first generation, in short, thought mainly of provincial rights and local individualism; the second generation, taking a wider view, thought more of the united nation. And the younger generation as usual prevailed.

The successive steps in the gradual change from divided provinces to united nation may be clearly discerned in the constitutional annals of the colony. At the annexation by Britain of the two islands of New Zealand and the smaller Stewart Island in 1840, they were given the names of New Ulster, New Munster, and New Leinster, by the Colonial Office;¹ less, perhaps, from

**Its Political
Influence.**

**Constitu-
tional De-
velopment,
1840-76.**

¹ Lord John Russell to Governor Hobson, 9th December 1840.

any idea of fitness than because a name of some kind is a convenient possession for a place as for a person, and the existing name of New Zealand recalled a Dutch and not an English province. The pseudo-Irish titles, however, were never in popular favour, and even on official documents their use was abandoned after the year 1852.

Meanwhile, in 1846 a Constitution had been given to the colony, and representative institutions conferred upon its people by the Imperial Government, which in this case at least could not be reproached for neglect of the liberties of its subjects overseas.

But the young colony was as yet hardly ready for the boon. It was still involved in the turmoil of the first Maori war, its white population was small and scattered, and with few interests in common; and hardly any settler outside the inconveniently situated capital had the time or inclination to leave his store or farm for several weeks in every year, in order to obtain the empty honour of representing his country in a parliament at Auckland. In these circumstances representative government was little better than a farce; and on the advice of Governor Sir George Grey, the Constitution was first suspended, and finally withdrawn in 1848.

Four years later, when the old provincial titles of New Ulster and New Munster were abolished, a new Constitution for New Zealand was approved by the Imperial Parliament, under which a Legislative Assembly for the whole country was to be held at Auckland; and the colony was now divided into six provinces, each of which was to have its separate District Council, whose large powers of control over local affairs could be checked by the veto of the governor of the colony. The six provinces were identical with the six original settlements; other provinces were subsequently added as colonisation advanced, and the following twenty years marks the zenith of provincialism in New Zealand.

The District Councils were exactly suited to this stage in

the growth of the colony, when Wellington was still jealous of Auckland, Dunedin of Canterbury, and all were isolated from, and independent of, each other. It was during this period that the suggestion was seriously made that none but Free Church Presbyterians should be allowed in the Scottish settlement,¹ and probably there were not lacking those who would have confined Canterbury to pioneers who professed their faith in the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church. But this narrowness of spirit, which had also held sway unchecked in the old American colonies—where none but Puritans were allowed in New England, and Dissenters were regarded with disfavour in Virginia²—was driven out by the influx of new immigrants, who entered New Zealand in large numbers between 1860 and 1870.

The first sign of an advance from provincialism to nationalism came in 1870, when the province of Southland, which had only separated from its parent in 1861, was reunited with Otago; and the inauguration of the Public Works and Immigration Policy in the same year finally swamped the provincial conception of the state with new settlers to whom the colony was much and the particular province little. Six years afterwards, in 1876, the District Councils were abolished; they had served their turn, and were no longer necessary to New Zealand.³

From that time the political unity of the islands was unquestioned; the national sentiment of the British settlers in New Zealand, which had been obscured by provincial jealousies and a restricted outlook, now expanded and bore fruit. Local interests remained, indeed, a vital subject, but local independence

¹ Hocken's *Settlement of Otago*.

² Vol i. bk. iv. chs. i. and iii.

³ Had the immigration policy been deferred a generation, the District Councils would probably have taken firmer root, and it might have proved as impossible to abolish them as it was to abolish the States in Australia and the United States of America. A political conception is in some respects like an oak; it grows slowly, it may easily be overthrown in its

of the kind that was still sought by a large party in Australia was henceforth a dead cause in New Zealand.

The Maori question, too, was already solved in its constitutional as well as its larger racial aspect. Even before the close of the native war in 1870 the white settlers had agreed that four Maori representatives should be elected by their own people to sit in the New Zealand Parliament, and in the year 1867 the first Maori member took his seat at Wellington. The grant of parliamentary rights to the remnant of a fighting race was a wise and generous step, which perhaps did something to reconcile them to the permanence of that British rule against which they had struggled in vain; it was an admission on the part of the conqueror that the conquered were worthy to take their share in the government of the country, and it conferred on the latter the rights of citizens as well as subjects.¹

early years, but once it is thoroughly established it may survive for centuries with little appearance of change.

It has often been remarked that both in Canada and the United States the main strength of provincial feeling is in the provinces founded before federation, and the main strength of federalism in the provinces founded after federation. In those cases the new immigrants settled in the new provinces; in New Zealand, where the old provinces were only sparsely colonised, the new immigrants were numerous enough to outweigh the original settlers and their provincialism.

¹ Many doubted the wisdom of the step at the time, and Governor Bowen remarked that in those days every member of the New Zealand Parliament had a policy of his own. But experience has justified the presence of the native members. They have proved quite as capable of looking after the interests of their constituents as the average white member, which is not indeed praising them very highly. On other matters not directly affecting the Maories they speak seldom and briefly; and they often divide their votes on neutral matters, two voting with the ministry and two with the opposition—an excellent arrangement which cancels their support of either side.

As an example of Maori oratory, I extract portions of a speech made by a native member in 1881 on the proposal to confer the suffrage on women. 'My opinion of this measure,' said Wi Piri, 'is that if it becomes law it will be a source of trouble to this House. I think we have only to look back to the trouble that came upon Adam through his wife giving him an apple. We should bear in mind the evil that befell Samson when his locks were shorn by Delilah. We should also bear in mind the story of Naboth's vineyard, how a woman incited a man to murder another in order to obtain possession of his vineyard. I am afraid if ladies were

Constitutional matters being thus brought to a happy issue in New Zealand, at a time when Australian statesmen were still divided as to the very framework of their national dwelling, the islands were free to turn their whole attention to their social and economic development. Nor were they lacking in leaders whose courage and enterprise marked out a new path for this new people to tread.

The frequent absence of great men on the petty stage of colonial provincial politics does not prove that great men did not exist; it merely indicates a lack of opportunities for men to achieve great reputations. George Washington himself, the greatest colonial statesman that has ever lived, would have left no more than a local memory as a just proprietor of vast estates in Virginia, and a creditable soldier in a backwoods campaign, had not the Imperial Civil War forced him forward;¹ others as great may well have lived and died unknown in uneventful surroundings. It is sometimes the event that makes the man; even the oak will be dwarfed if it grows in a pot.

But New Zealand, at the parting of the roads between a province and a nation, was fortunate in providing the opportunity, and possessing leaders who could advantage themselves of the occasion. Three men stand conspicuous as the architects of her national fortunes during the forty years that separate the close of the last Maori war from the recognition of the colony as the second dominion of the Empire.

allowed seats in the House it would distract the attention of some honourable members, and they would not pay so much attention to the affairs of the colony as they would otherwise do. Although I am getting up in years I must confess that I should be affected by a weakness of that sort. If the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill would introduce the clause providing that only plain women should be allowed to come into the House, I think the source of danger would be removed; but if any beautiful ladies were sent to this House I am quite sure they would lead astray the tender hearts of some honourable gentlemen, particularly the elder members of the House. I say in conclusion that if attractive ladies are allowed to come into this House, I am quite certain my own wife will never consent to my returning here.'

¹ See vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iii.

The first of these, Sir Julius Vogel,¹ instituted the Public Works and Immigration Policy which stimulated the rapid growth of New Zealand as a white man's land. The second, Sir George Grey, was premier of the colony several years after he had been its governor; an autocratic democrat, and proud of a colony that was proud of him, he was nevertheless in many ways out of touch with the public mind.² He planned better than he built; but the third statesman, the adoptive heir of Grey's policy, Richard John Seddon, built better perhaps than he could have planned, and in the end headed the new New Zealand school of experimental politics that became celebrated throughout the world.³

Grey foretold the birth of a new English nation in the antipodes. Vogel brought out the men to make that nation by his immigration policy. And Seddon, entering into their inheritance, led the new nation forward, hewing out the new path whose main direction Grey had vaguely indicated.

Richard John Seddon, the second child of a Lancashire schoolmaster, was born at Eccleston, near St. Helens, on 22nd June 1845. A restless and reckless lad, such learning as he could be induced to swallow was administered to him in his father's class-room, probably in the perfunctory and unpalatable manner that practice has consecrated into custom among English teachers; but young Seddon was to be a student of men, not of books, unlike his master Grey, who was a scholar as well as a statesman. Throughout Seddon's career his ignorance of literature, of history, and the arts remained profound—the only book he was ever seen to read, apart from Blue Books, Hansard's Debates, and Parliamentary Procedure, was an account of

Richard
Seddon,
1845-1906.

¹ Vogel was the second man of Jewish race to rise to the position of prime minister in any British country. He became Premier of New Zealand in 1873; Disraeli had been Premier of the United Kingdom in 1868.

² Grey, for instance, advocated federal union with Australia—a cause that aroused not the least enthusiasm in New Zealand.

³ See *Life and Work of R. J. Seddon* by James Drummond, 1907.

piracy on the Spanish Main—but the lack of learning was not altogether a disadvantage. Knowledge is power, but power that sometimes entraps its possessor; those who inherit the gifts of their fathers may find that legacies restrain rather than encourage action. Had Seddon known more of the past of the old world, he might have worked with more hesitating touch for the future of the new.

Apprenticeship to a firm of Liverpool engineers followed hard upon his school-days, and opened out a wider horizon. But not wide enough: and when stories came home of wealth won in a week on the goldmines of Ballarat and Bendigo, Seddon, like many another penniless but ambitious lad of the time, set out for the diggings to seek his fortune.

But fortune would have none of his wooing. The great days of individual successes were over; mining in Victoria had become a steady industry, with good wages but few prizes, and it was not for mere wages that Seddon had crossed the world at seventeen. That he could have had in Lancashire.

In 1866, however, gold was discovered on the west coast of New Zealand. This time Seddon was early on the scenes; but while many of his comrades grew rich—some had to carry their finds of gold in a kettle, the ordinary leather bag of the diggings being too small—his own luck was again out. This second failure dashed his hopes as a miner; but Seddon, like a wise man, accepted the rebuff and opened a store.¹

As the barber becomes a general gossip, so does the store-keeper's occupation lead to politics. Seddon had already loosed his inexperienced tongue in the workshop politics of Victoria; in New Zealand he soon became known as an agitator, a loud-voiced, self-confident democrat who was never

¹ My old friend, the Rev. Thomas Flavell, who spent many years in New Zealand, tells me he remembers having Seddon as a chance travelling-companion on a west-coast coach in these days. As they alighted, Seddon pointed to a plot of land, and said, 'See that plot, parson? That's where I'm going to put my pub.' That was the beginning of his success.

far removed from the demagogue, a hefty politician who could knock his opponent down when other argument failed to convince—as it sometimes did on the goldfields. A knuckly fist was more useful than reliance on political precedent on the west coast in those days.

Municipal politics led naturally to the New Zealand Parliament at Wellington, which Seddon entered in 1879 as a supporter of Sir George Grey. For twelve years he was a private member, speaking often and not always well or to the point;¹ but those years were an invaluable experience for the future Premier. New Zealand was advancing rapidly, too rapidly even, under the Immigration Policy; industry was expanding, population growing, the credit of the colony lavishly pledged in public works, and speculation in land forced prices up beyond all reason.

A crash was inevitable, nor was it in the end an unhealthy tonic for a young and vigorous community. But when it came men left the colony by thousands; those who remained cried aloud, and not without cause, that the Government which had deluded them into coming to New Zealand with false promises of work must provide the work which it had promised; and while the Cabinet tried every expedient in turn to allay distress, each step it took diminished its hold upon the colony. At the general election of 1890 it was defeated.

In the new ministry, headed by John Ballance, a respected politician who had spent much of his parliamentary career opposing the late Cabinet, Seddon found a place as Minister for Public Works, Mines, and Defence. But fortune now

¹ An unkindly newspaper opponent once wrote, 'He talked himself into the Acting Premiership, and then talked himself into the position of Prime Minister. No matter what the subject is, he is ready to talk. His talk is never clever, never witty, always spun out till it is not worth listening to.' Another journalist referred to him as a born fighter, but no more than a heavy-weight pugilist.

But the exhumation of the corpses of dead newspaper articles is at best a dismal business.

made amends for past neglect. The active work of Ballance was near an end, and within a few months Seddon was Acting Premier ; and early in 1893 Ballance died.

For the moment Seddon seems to have hesitated to grasp the prize within his reach ; he consulted his old leader, Sir George Grey, twice before taking the final step of accepting the vacant Premiership. This act of indecision, at the vital moment of his career, was strangely out of keeping with his usual firmness of purpose ; but neither he nor the country had reason to regret the choice. Seddon retained office until he died thirteen years later ; and the administration he formed outlasted his life six years, and survived six general elections.

The ministry which was to pass some of the most novel and daring legislation that had ever been placed on any English statute book, and was to perform the hardly less remarkable feat of holding office continuously for over twenty years, in a country where the existence of parliament was limited to three years, began its career quietly enough. Retrenchment was the password everywhere ; officials were dismissed, expenses cut down, and drastic economies effected in every department, until the colony had recovered from the financial stress. The remedy was harsh but effectual ; a young community, like a young man, possesses natural recuperative powers that an elder may envy. Within a few months New Zealand turned the corner to prosperity ; the Colonial Budget showed a surplus ; and men who had been leaving the islands for Australia began to return with renewed hopes. Thus it was that when Seddon became Premier in 1893 the path was clear from immediate anxieties, and the first general election that was fought after his appointment increased his power. His government counted fifty-six supporters in a House of seventy-four.

Apart from a serious crisis in the affairs of the Bank of New

Zealand, which required and obtained prompt action by the Government to save the chief financial institution in the colony, no unexpected problem of any moment, no political cyclone of the kind that sometimes overwhelms an administration in a day, thrust itself upon the Seddon Cabinet during its thirteen years of office. The way was clear for other things, and the new ministry was no niggard of work.

Originality was the mark of the Cabinet in its legislative programme, but some of the causes championed by Seddon's followers were rather doubtfully embraced by the premier. He was openly dubious at first as to the wisdom of granting the franchise to women, but the female suffrage law was passed during his first year in office, and its provisions were subsequently copied and even extended by other Australasian communities.¹ And Seddon's sympathies were hardly given very cordially to the strong temperance movement which soon made itself felt as a public force, and which in time advanced from a mere agitation against alcohol to a demand for the total prohibition of its sale within the colony;² for Seddon did not himself disdain the pleasures of the table, and his partiality for public banquets was a pronounced characteristic of his career.

But the general social policy of the Cabinet he thoroughly approved; the experimental laws and the attempt to build up a better race under better conditions had his warm support.³ In this, as in other phases of his statesmanship, he was the

¹ The franchise was extended to all adult women in New Zealand in 1893. In the following year it was granted in South Australia, with the added right to enter parliament. West Australia followed suit in 1899, and New South Wales in 1902. No female candidate actually appeared in South Australia. To see female members of parliament one has to go to Finland, a country which has lost its independence.

New Zealand generally takes credit for being the pioneer of woman suffrage in British communities. I am loth to deny her claim, but I think Pitcairn Island preceded her (bk. xx. ch. i.), although the actual date of when women first voted there I have been unable to ascertain.

² Prohibition, which in practice surely means secret drinking, was only narrowly defeated at the polls in 1911.

³ See bk. xxii.

political child and successor of Sir George Grey, whose ideas he adopted, and whom he resembled in his semi-autocratic rule of a democracy : but Seddon showed, what Grey had not shown in his later years, a power of getting things done, and a rude strength that delighted in the triumph of the cause as well as the cause itself, which carried him through every difficulty. If he was not a great man, he was built on a great scale, and his extraordinary energy and faith in himself achieved more constructive work than many a greater man has done. He overbore all opposition when premier as easily as in the days when his fists were as useful as his tongue on the goldfields ; and when he died prematurely in 1906 the whole world recognised that the British Empire had lost a notable leader. Unlike most colonial premiers, who are conspicuous within their own provincial circle and unknown beyond its narrow bounds, Seddon had made himself and the colony he led felt as a force far beyond New Zealand.

His policy survived him ; the impetus he had given to the Government was not spent till six years after his death. He had drawn his political creed from Sir George Grey ; he handed it on to Sir Joseph Ward, a successor only less energetic, but palpably less able, than himself, who led the Cabinet until the general election of 1911 left him with a bare majority in parliament.

In the early days of his Ministry Seddon had developed from a parochial to a national politician, and during the last few years of his life his horizon again enlarged, and he became one of the leading exponents of the new imperialism of the time, encouraging the despatch of New Zealand volunteers to assist Britain in the South African War, and strongly advocating the expansion of the Empire within the Pacific Ocean. He was able to claim that it was largely through his action that the Cook and other islands were placed under the administration of New Zealand ;¹

His

External
Policy.

¹ See bk. xx. ch. i.

but he pointed with disgust to the refusal of the Imperial Government to annex Samoa, its failure to control the whole New Hebrides group, its obvious lack of grip in the problems of the Pacific Ocean.

In his external as well as his internal policy, Seddon was the disciple of Grey, who had advocated the domination of the Pacific by Britain and the new English nations whose birth he had foreseen in the South Seas ; but Grey lived too soon, Seddon too late, and both lived too near the Pacific and too far from London for that policy to triumph.

But the future control of the Pacific Ocean was a question that touched New Zealand as closely as Australia. And the colony, which was raised to the status of a Dominion in 1907, undertook its own defence with the same alacrity that the Commonwealth had shown when the necessity arose. Universal military training was enforced in 1911, and the system met with hearty approval from the mass of the people, who were fully alive to the need of national defence ;¹ but instead of constructing her own naval flotilla as Australia had done,² New Zealand was content to rely on the imperial fleet, to whose upkeep she contributed, as a visible means of expressing her faith in imperial unity.

Their treatment of the question of defence shows at once the likeness and divergence between the two English nations in the antipodes. Neither shirked the issue ; both proved themselves equal to the unwelcome occasion. Both undertook full charge of their land defences. Neither undertook full charge of their sea defences ; but while Australia built her own fleet, and insisted on local control, New Zealand left her ocean defences entirely in the hands of Britain. It is true

¹ A few men objected to military training on the grounds of conscience. They appear to have been excused. The possessors of such tender consciences often rely on the fact that that unseen treasure cannot be cross-examined to show whether it is not merely an alias for bad citizenship.

² Bk. xx, ch. iii.

that the Dominion, with a smaller population than the Commonwealth, and therefore one unable to bear so heavy a burden, could not build her own fleet. But had she chosen, she could have joined hands with Australia rather than Britain ; the fact that she did not, and that she proclaimed her decision and the reasons for it openly before the world,¹ was a sufficient testimony to the reality of her belief in Imperial Federation.

To the cause of Imperial Federation, indeed, New Zealand had long been the most stalwart adherent. Her people had rejected federal union with Australia, since they had no wish to sink their national individuality in the Commonwealth ; but they had coupled their rejection with a profession of faith in the federal union of the Empire.² Seddon had urged the cause, and Ward, following in his steps, propounded a scheme of Imperial Federation before the unwilling ears of his colleagues from Britain and overseas at the Imperial Conference of 1911.³

But in this matter, as in her social legislation, New Zealand was in advance of the Empire. The explanation is simple. Her line of progress had certainly been the same as that of Canada and Australia. Like them, she had passed from provincial jealousy and divisions to national unity ; but the road had not been beset with the same difficulties, and it had therefore been more quickly travelled. No language question divided her provinces, as it did those of Canada ;⁴ no fiscal question raised commercial barriers, as in Australia.⁵

¹ Sir Joseph Ward at the Royal Colonial Institute banquet, Empire Day, 1911. A storm of cheering greeted the declaration.

² Bk. xix. ch. iii.

³ It must be confessed that Sir Joseph Ward had not thought out his scheme very thoroughly. But had he been a messenger from heaven, which quite obviously he was not, I doubt if he would have had a more sympathetic hearing from the British Premier, H. H. Asquith, who was an exponent of the old Liberal doctrine of full autonomy, and who cross-examined the New Zealand Premier as though he was a conspirator in the dock.

⁴ Vol. iii. bk. xi. chs. iv. and v.

⁵ Bk. xix. ch. iii.

New Zealand had achieved her national unity more quickly than her elder sisters, and she was ready to march forward on the new path of imperial unity while they were still as distrustful of a larger scheme of union as their own provinces had been of national union.

It is said by some naturalists that the soil of New Zealand is so fertile, and its climate so kindly, that plants and animals which are transported there from less favoured lands grow more rapidly and to a larger size than is their wont elsewhere. If the parallel holds good in the more artificial sphere of politics—and the social and constitutional history of two generations does not contradict the assumption—the young nation in New Zealand should evolve a better social order among its people, and at the same time give to the British Empire its final link of federal union. Should that prove to be the case, then the Empire and the world at large will have good reason to be grateful to the discoverers of the twin gems of the southern seas.

BOOK XXII

BRITAIN IN THE SOUTH: 1911

THE first century of British history in Australasia may be summarised briefly by the contrast between old Botany Bay and new Sydney, between old Port Phillip and new Melbourne, between an outcast colony and an honourable Commonwealth. The rarely interrupted material advance, the gradual evolution of a civilisation and the birth of a new nation in a new land, the peaceful growth of society taking firm root in a strange soil, characterised the English in the antipodes during the fruitful years between the final abolition of transportation to Australia in 1868 and the federation of the five continental colonies with Tasmania in 1901; and only a decade later the recognition of New Zealand as a Dominion likewise put the stamp of nationhood on that younger but not less prosperous community.

The old convict slur had long since utterly disappeared, leaving no trace in twentieth-century Australia. The new English nations of Australia and New Zealand had been built up of free men who had come from a free country. They boasted their British origin, and the predominantly British character of their civilisation; and the boast was true.

Nevertheless, some variations from the parent stock were seen in these younger communities. The English in Australia had to accustom themselves to different conditions of life from those which they had known in the motherland; in some ways they rejected the old traditions, notably some of the old conservative traditions

**The New
English
Nations.**

**Their
Variations
from Old
Britain.**

of England, and showed themselves ready to strike out an entirely new path for themselves. It may be of interest to enquire how far those variations had gone, whether the causes that produced them sprang from the soil, the climate, or the people themselves ; and, so far as is possible without exchanging the sober robes of the historian for the more daring mantle of the prophet, to ascertain in what direction those variations ultimately tended.

Among the letters which crossed the ocean from emigrant sons to stay-at-home parents in the earlier days of Australasian settlement one may be quoted, that expresses in crude but forcible language an idea common to most of the poorer pioneers in the bush, an idea that gives the key to such part of the variation of Australia from Britain as was due to human circumstance. 'I am happy I left home,' wrote a willing exile to New Zealand, 'I would not live in England again. . . . Here we speak our own words, but you cannot, for you are afraid of the gentlemen ; as for them (here) they are obliged to come under us, instead of us coming under them. The labouring class is as well off here as the nobs at home. A person has a little chance to do something in this part of the world, and that is more than you can do at home, for hard work all a lifetime, and at last be starved almost, for the money is in the hands of the great and they will keep it ; but here the money must come out, or else the great cannot live.' ¹

This excellent person certainly had the root of the matter in him. There were few opportunities for him or his class in England ; the peasant labourer in the old country had to labour all his days, for small wages, with little or no hope of rising either in the social or economic scale ; and the rule of the gentry of the English countryside, kindly as it often was, was firm

Partly Due
to Human
Circum-
stance.

Dependent
Condition of
the English
Peasantry.

¹ *Latest Information from New Plymouth* (1842). The volume is largely a collection of letters from emigrants.

enough to keep the labourer in the place which it was supposed that God had made him for.

The whole theory of English society for centuries past had been based on the idea of an orderly succession of classes ; in politics there were king, lords, and commons ; in the Church there were bishops, priests, and deacons ; in the more intimate daily life of the nation there were landowner, tenant-farmer, labourer. Among those various classes the peasant labourer, and the peasant labourer only, had no chance of improving his condition. Originally a serf tied to the soil, his development had been arrested when he gained his political freedom. Villeinage had died out centuries back, amid tumults and agrarian disorders ; but the tradition of dependence remained, and the facts justified the tradition.

The landowner might indeed lose his possessions, by extravagance or political blunders ; he might consolidate and enlarge them by marriage or careful management, and thus found a great family, powerful in the state. The thrifty tenant-farmer might sometimes take advantage of his landlord's embarrassment, and buy the land which he had farmed with profit and success ; the thriftless or incapable tenant-farmer might be ejected and fall to the rank of labourer.

Within these limits there were chances of rising, dangers of falling ; but the labourer could hardly fall, and he could seldom rise, of his own exertions. He lived and died in a rut of economic circumstance and settled tradition from which it was impossible to escape.¹ He could never save money from his wages, he could never buy land, he could rarely even rent it ; an allotment—the very term stamped his little holding as a privilege, not a right—was his utmost

¹ I should like to have heard an intelligent peasant's comments on the doctrine of free will. Dr. Johnson once remarked, with the shallow arrogance which stamped so much of his conversation, that we knew we had free will and there was an end of the matter. If the lexicographer had reflected that none of us have any choice even in so fundamental a thing as the determination of our own sex, he might have qualified his statement.

portion. He accepted perforce his dependent position, as he accepted his little cottage, his inadequate wages mitigated by occasional bounties and occasional petty tyranny from Hall or Manor House, because there was nothing better for him in the scheme of life. If he grumbled, he grumbled secretly ;¹ if he was dissatisfied, his only escape was to enter the army or to run away to sea.

The industrial revolution in eighteenth-century England, and the growth of factories and towns, altered the labourer's outlook to some extent. But at most he could only exchange one employment for another, and he did not always better his condition thereby. If he gained a nominal independence he lost the very real protection of his superiors in station, which had generally kept the worst evils of poverty from his door while he remained a rural labourer.

But the colonial expansion of Britain at last gave the rural labourer his opportunity. It was as though a great door was suddenly opened in his life that revealed the way to a priceless heritage beyond his wildest dreams. The final act in the upward progress of the English peasantry, from villein and serf to independent owner of the soil, was enacted, indeed, not in England at all,² but in the outer empire, in the wide spaces, the open prairies, and the boundless bush of Canada and Australia. Here were millions of acres awaiting occupation ; here the rural labourer of England could become a landowner with possessions greater

Their Independence in Australia.

¹ Being without education, the peasant's complaints seldom attained literary form, although *Piers Plowman* is a rare but significant exception. And conscious of the power of the gentry, the peasant usually remained taciturn except within the shelter of his own walls ; but letters such as that quoted above (which is but one of several I have come across) show that he was fully aware of the shortcomings of his position.

² The English peasant's condition at the beginning of the twentieth century still bore emphatic testimony to his arrested development. Food and wages had steadily improved in most districts, but it was practically impossible for him to obtain land, and the small-holdings movement was as yet in its infancy. In consequence the peasantry were steadily deserting the rural districts for the great towns or the colonies.

perhaps than those of the landed aristocracy at home. He was generously helped to emigrate by the local county gentry, who realised as well as he the lack of opportunity in England ; and in his hands lay the making or the marring of the colony to which he went.

Others had, it is true, been before him in Australia, aristocrats, men of substance and family, who farmed on a far larger scale than anything he had known in England. But these were few in number if sometimes great in wealth ; and the aristocrat, like the peasant, was a new man in a new land.

Here was no settled tradition of sharply-defined classes ; the new colony had to form its own traditions. And in any case, the emigrant labourer was hardly likely to look too kindly on some of the traditions of the England he had left. Those traditions had merely stamped him as an inferior, a free man without opportunity, a labourer without profit from his work, a man who lived by the land without having any share in the land. From those traditions he naturally revolted at the first opportunity.

But in Australia he might become a landowner, who worked for himself and for no other man, who could rise, as no peasant labourer in England could ever rise, to wealth and power and honour in the state, who could found a family and amass great possessions by his own exertions.

He took the opportunity and profited therefrom ; but much of the readiness of the English in Australia to strike out a line for themselves, to reject the old traditions, and to adopt a frankly experimental attitude towards problems of land, labour, wages, and expenditure lay in the fact that to the large class of settlers which was drawn from the peasantry of England the traditions of the old country were merely a remembrance of social and economic inferiority.

They were convinced democrats in the land of their adoption, because the land of their birth was aristocratic ; and since the organisation of society on aristocratic lines had

given them no chance of rising, they hoped for better things from a new organisation on democratic lines.

The English peasant brought sterling qualities with him to aid in the founding of Australia. Physically he was strong, with the inherited strength of many generations that had lived close to the soil; mentally he was dogged and persevering, if unimaginative. His position of inferiority in England had made him taciturn, and prone to conceal his real thoughts; but in Australasia, when he gained his freedom of action, he gained also readiness of speech.

But he was not able to conquer his heritage without a struggle. On his arrival in the antipodes he found himself confronted with an aristocracy of pastoralist squatters, men who counted their wealth in many thousands of sheep and cattle, able and resourceful men of the strong outspoken type of John Macarthur.¹ These were the first generation, or the descendants of the first generation, of free Australian settlers, who had occupied the vast pasture lands of the interior and cleared the up-country bush for their flocks and herds. For these men the natural conditions of Australia were admirably suited, and they had taken full advantage of their opportunities.

The Old
Australian
Aristocracy.

There was a time, indeed, when it seemed that this squatter aristocracy might permanently control the development of the country, when it seemed that the average free immigrant without capital might be compelled permanently to remain an employee and never become an independent employer. There was even for a time a danger that the white man without capital might be displaced altogether as an employed servant of the squatter by an immigrant of non-British and non-European race, imported as an indentured labourer at low wages for a term of years.² Had that occurred, the

¹ Bk. xvii. ch. iv. and bk. xviii. ch. ii.

² Bk. xx. ch. iii. for the struggle to exclude cheap foreign labour. The Kanaka labourer in Australia was usually paid fourpence a day; in Fiji he only received twopence.

whole basis of Australian social, industrial, and economic life would have been changed.¹

But from that danger Australia escaped after a long struggle. If the antipodean colonies of England were industrially a pastoral aristocracy, a collection of great proprietors with large estates and great possessions, politically those colonies were a democracy. The great squatter, who had none of the traditional and inherited power which strengthened the position of the aristocracy in Britain, had no more votes than the humble sheepshearer on his estate, and the continual influx of immigrants, mostly men without capital, made for a steady shifting of the balance towards democracy.² And since political power in a democracy falls to the weight of numbers, and the small men without capital were in a large majority, a conflict at once arose between the many small men with much collective political power and the relatively few powerful men with much economic power. The watchwords of that conflict were Closer Settlement and a White Australia.

It happened incidentally that the conflict between aristocrat and democrat in Australia was a conflict also between pastoralist and agriculturist, two primitive necessary occupations which have been opposed through all the ages.³ The

¹ There would have been no need to describe it in detail. A reference to the social conditions in the West Indies and British Guiana would have been sufficient (vol. iv. bk. xii. chs. i. and ii.). The best Australian employers would have been owners of the type of the Fairfaxes and Washingtons of Virginia (vol. iii. bk. ix. chs. i. and ii.); the worst would have been the small employers who could not afford to treat their employees well.

² A writer in the *Queensland Review*, 1886, says that the gold-diggers in Victoria and elsewhere were the standard-bearers of democracy. That is the kind of general statement which it is impossible to accept completely or to deny altogether. One might as well say that parliamentary government was always inefficient because the Long Parliament in England beheaded a man whose motto was 'Thorough,' a watchword that has since fallen into some discredit among politicians.

And Macarthur complained of the spread of democracy forty years before gold was discovered (bk. xvii. ch. iv.).

³ The first shepherd, Abel, was killed by the first agriculturist, Cain, as every Sunday-school child knows.

great pastoralist in the antipodes, who owned or occupied thousands of acres, and whose enormous flocks and herds were driven across the boundaries of one colony to another in the eternal search for good grass-lands, looked with contempt on the small agriculturist who farmed a few acres of corn with the aid of his family, and whose remaining live-stock was probably no more than a couple of horses, a milch cow, and perhaps a pig or a pen of sheep.

Conflict
between
the Two.

On his own ground, it is true, the agriculturist could beat the squatter. Both needed corn; but the small farmer could raise his produce far more cheaply, with the active aid of his wife and children, than the great pastoralist, who had to pay, and to pay a high price, for all the labour he required.¹

But it was not so much on the question of price as of opportunity that the battle between the two interests was fought when the political democracy set itself to break the power of the pastoral aristocracy. Except in South Australia, where there were many small farmers from the beginning, a constant struggle raged for possession of the land; and here the pastoralist, having been first in the field, and having, moreover, larger resources to draw upon, was easily victorious for many years.

There were no limits to the territorial ambitions of the early squatters or pastoralists. A few men would seize upon hundreds of thousands of acres, and the fact that they prospered and grew wealthy made it always extremely difficult and often impossible to dispossess them.

The Pastoralist in Possession.

In one extreme case W. C. Wentworth, the Australian politician, actually claimed that he had purchased the whole of the South Island of New Zealand and two hundred thousand acres of the North Island for £400 in cash and a few annuities

¹ Lancelott's *Australia as it is*.

to Maori chiefs.¹ This farcical purchase, and many others of a similar but less monstrous kind, were very properly disallowed by Governor Gipps, who waged unceasing war against the great squatters, declaring that 'to allow them to seize on all the lands of the Crown would be to ruin the colony. . . . (They were) persons whose avowed object was to get fixity of tenure without paying for it, but the right (of the Government) to oust the squatter was to remain absolute.' Wentworth in turn denounced Gipps as the author of 'regulations which must not only be ruinous in their immediate operation, but calculated to strike a blow at the future prosperity of the colony'; but denunciations inspired by self-interest are not always convincing, even when uttered by men who openly proclaim themselves patriots and friends of freedom.

Apart from these notorious cases, however, there were thousands of regular and legal purchases of land from the Crown, at the price fixed by the Crown itself, by free settlers with capital. It has been calculated² that from first to last about one hundred and twenty-three million acres of land were sold by the Australian State Governments for about the same number of pounds sterling. It might be, and often was, contended that that price was too low,³ but once the contract had been made it could not be broken, without a breach of faith that would have destroyed the whole credit of the Government.

¹ Similar cases are mentioned in bk. xviii. ch. iii. and bk. xxi. ch. ii. There is an ancient story of a squatter who, when asked by a Government surveyor the extent of his estate, took that official to the top of a hill, and said, 'All there, as far as you can see, is mine. All beyond is my son Jack's.' The official might have retorted that the squatter's claim was as extensive as that of Satan when he tempted Christ in the wilderness.

² See the paper read before the British Association in 1911 by W. Pember Reeves, the New Zealand publicist, reported in the *London Times* for 1st September of that year; also *Papers relative to the Taxation of Unimproved Land*, issued by the Colonial Office (Cd. 3191).

³ It was of course said that these lands were sold too cheaply to the pastoralists in the first instance. There is perhaps some truth in that view, but it must be remembered that if the lands had not been cheap the pastoral industry, to which Australia owes much, would not have

But the real flaw in these contracts had nothing to do with the question of price, but with the question of occupation. There was nothing to prevent a capitalist from buying large quantities of land as a speculation, and holding for some years against a probable rise in value.¹ He sometimes lost by the transaction when the bubble of speculation burst, and he was forced to sell in a falling and panic-stricken market ; more often he realised large profits ; but the colony suffered heavily in every instance, for by this means many thousands of acres that should have been available for agricultural settlement lay idle season after season.

The Government which had sold the land was powerless, for it had sold unconditionally ; the proprietor was often an absentee, living in one of the great Australian cities or even in England ;² and the would-be settler on the spot naturally cursed both the Government and the landowner that had made the original bad bargain. The antipodean colonies, in fact, were faced with a problem which would have been absurd had it not been so serious, for while the greater part of the land was unoccupied and undeveloped, the greater part was not available either for occupation or settlement. From that impasse the Australasian Governments had perforce to extricate themselves.

made such rapid progress. The lands, moreover, were virgin soil, and sometimes very poor soil at that : the purchaser had to undertake the whole expense of clearing. And the original prices had often been fixed before the discovery of gold brought a large market for meat almost to the pastoralists' doors, or the steamship and the preservation of meat by the freezing and chilling processes allowed them to compete in the European market.

¹ The same difficulty occurred in Canada.

Both in Australia and New Zealand the Wakefield system was a fruitful source of speculation in land ; and another Company bought a million acres in New South Wales for eighteenpence an acre.

² Instances were cited from New Zealand of estates ranging from fifty to seventy thousand acres of fertile land, inhabited by only a dozen or twenty people ; and there was one case of an absentee proprietor who drew £2000 a year from the colony and only spent £75 within its borders.

Of the ten largest estates in South Australia eight were held by absentees. (Speech by Cockburn, 19th March 1890.)

The full history of the land legislation necessitated by the struggle between squatter, pastoralist, or absentee and the small farmer in Australia is a long one, and stretches back to the primitive days when the squatter was a mere lawless occupier of lands to which he had no title whatever. The first regulation of the New South Wales Government protecting Crown lands from the intrusion and trespass of unauthorised persons was passed in 1833, six years after the last ticket of occupation had been issued. Fresh regulations, enforced by severe penalties, were imposed in 1839.

The
Struggle
for Land.

But in 1847 an Order in Council, issued at the direction of the Imperial Government, changed those who had previously been mere licence-holders into lease-holders—a regulation which enormously strengthened the position of the great pastoralists. The sheep-breeding industry profited greatly from this change, since it gave the squatter the fixity of tenure which he had so long and very naturally desired; but in the end Australia had to pay a heavy price for the concession.¹

An Occupation Act of 1861, which limited the tenure of these leases, and thereby threw lands hitherto occupied by the squatter open to the man who wished to select a small holding from the Crown,² was directly in favour of the small farmer, whose voice now began to be heard more distinctly and forcibly since responsible parliamentary institutions had

¹ Rather curiously, considering that this Order in Council has been denounced by two generations of Australian land-reformers in unmeasured terms, the abolition of annual licences in favour of leaseholds for the pastoralists is recommended in the official report on the Northern Territory for 1911, and for the same reason that induced the Imperial Government to take the step.

² These selectors, however, were a source of much trouble at times. They naturally selected the best land for themselves, and their small holdings in the middle of large estates brought down the value of what remained unselected far below its proper value. Nobody wants to farm an estate when the other man has taken his pick of the best, and left the larger and least productive area to others.

been granted to the colony ; and the subject was again dealt with by legislation in 1884, 1889, and 1895. In each of the other colonies the same lengthy list of land laws could be enumerated ; in New Zealand alone, for example, when the land laws were consolidated in 1892, it was found that there were already fifty-two Acts and Ordinances on the statute-book, and the consolidating law was itself amended five times during the next ten years.

But the continual repetition of these Ordinances, Acts, and Regulations proves that they were not very effectual. In the rich valleys of the Murray, the Murrumbidgee, and the Lachlan rivers, where the struggle between squatter and small farmer had been fiercest, it is true that there had been a remarkable increase in wheat-growing and agriculture generally—a sure sign that the small farmer had made headway. But it was not until the year 1897 that the production of wheat in New South Wales was equal to the consumption ; and the pastoral industry in every colony except South Australia was far more powerful than the agricultural. Despite half a century of legislation, the great estates still held their own, and in some districts there were even indications that they were increasing.

The great pastoralists certainly passed through grave crises in times of drought. Individual squatters lost everything, but as a class they survived the visitations of nature ; nor was their strength as a whole diminished by the elimination of the less efficient in their ranks. But the bad seasons which killed their sheep and cattle by the thousand often brought complete ruin to the small agriculturist, whose crops were destroyed by lack of water, and whose private resources were altogether unequal to the strain of a profitless year.¹

¹ The terrible effects of a prolonged drought over several seasons may be judged from the following figures. In 1895 Australia possessed one hundred and six million sheep ; by 1902, the number had sunk to fifty-

There were continual complaints that the great pastoralists had every advantage, and that the laws of the colonies were made for the rich. The former complaint was justified, the latter was not justified for very long; for if the great pastoralists had the advantage of greater economic resources, the laws tended gradually but very definitely to favour the small farmer, and to insist on the necessity of breaking up the large estates for closer settlement.

Some progress had already been made in opening up the land, for when the leases of the squatters lapsed, their huge estates were thrown open to the small farmer to select his holding on easy terms; but advance by this means was generally slow, and the question of closer settlement was urgent. And there were still vast estates either used as sheep-runs or not used at all, which could have been colonised by the new immigrants had the land been available for settlement. Some of these estates were bought back from their purchasers by the state governments, and disposed of to small agriculturists;¹ in twenty years New Zealand, for instance, spent about £6,000,000 sterling in buying back about 1,400,000 acres that had originally been sold at prices ranging from 5s. to £2 an acre, and Australia by 1910 had repurchased 2,107,886 acres under a series of Closer Settle-

three million. By 1906, when that drought had passed, the number of sheep had again risen to eighty-four millions.

In 1901 Australia exported twenty-five million bushels of wheat. In 1903 the crops were inadequate, and eleven million bushels were imported; by 1906, however, the country was again growing more than was required for home consumption, and thirty-nine million bushels were exported. The recovery was as quick as the original loss was heavy.

¹ Voluntary repurchase was tried at first, with the natural result that only poor land that never had paid and never could pay was offered to the governments. In one case, a large estate was offered to the New Zealand Government at £4 an acre. When the place was inspected it was found to be nothing but gravel. After one or two experiences of that kind, the colonial governments realised that they must have compulsory powers to repurchase lands. I have not discovered any instances where they abused their powers, but several in which I suspect—I admit I cannot prove it—that they have made a rather bad bargain.

ment Acts for £6,904,300. But this was a heavy price to pay for the original mistake, and a serious drain on the none too ample resources of the Australasian colonies.

By the year 1890 the position had become critical, for settlers were leaving New Zealand complaining that land could not be obtained, although not half the country was even loosely occupied. It was in consequence of this serious situation, which threatened the whole future of the colony, that a new and powerful instrument was devised by the New Zealand Government.

That instrument was a land tax, which was imposed only incidentally for the purpose of raising revenue, but primarily and deliberately in order to break up the large estates—a political measure whose real character was hardly concealed under the mantle of finance. The Land Taxes.

In the year 1891 a special tax was laid in New Zealand on land, which was designed to bear heavily on large estates, and more particularly on the large blocks of virgin or 'unimproved' land held by absentee proprietors.¹ It was intended to force the sale of large estates by rendering the holding of them against a future rise in value unprofitable, and some large estates certainly came into the market in consequence. But although the law was several times recast and its provisions strengthened, until in 1910 it imposed a tax of twenty-five per cent. on very large properties of the value of £40,000 or more, the number of large freehold estates had actually increased from 463 in 1892 to 652 in 1906. The increased value of land had more than

¹ Absentee proprietors had to pay a supertax of twenty per cent. An absentee was one who had not lived in the colony during the previous twelve months. At first the period was three years, but it was found that the tax was evaded by the proprietor paying an occasional short visit to New Zealand.

This was not actually the first land tax. A tax had been imposed in Victoria in 1877 on all estates over six hundred and forty acres, but it proved inoperative. A similar tax had been imposed in New Zealand in 1878, but it was repealed in the following year.

compensated for the heavy taxation, and in part the taxes had been evaded by the nominal division of an estate among the members of a family.

Ineffective as the tax admittedly was, its principle was adopted and extended in Australia. After a general election that turned largely on the land tax, the Commonwealth Government imposed in 1910 a federal tax on land values over £5000 when owned by residents, and on all land, of whatever value, when owned by absentees. These latter were also compelled to pay under a special schedule; and the total land taxes in Australia, particularly on large estates, were heavier than in New Zealand, while the tendency in both countries was to increase the rate until the effective point should be reached when the large proprietor found it better to sell than to hold his land. In each case, however, the constantly increasing value of the land restricted the efficacy of the tax.

These taxes, imposed by the majority of landless men on the minority possessed of real estate, were denounced by the latter as confiscation, and upheld by the former as essential to the well-being of the community. Each was right from his own point of view.

The tax was certainly devised to force the large landowner to sell—a procedure which, although not confiscation, since the vendor probably received more than he originally paid, had an ugly appearance when the element of compulsion inherent in an increasing tax was considered. The possessors were only profiting from the greater foresight of themselves or their parents, and they may be pardoned if they could not see much justification for being deprived of the fruits of that foresight by those who had had less acumen or fewer opportunities. A special tax as a weapon of policy is open to grave abuses, when wielded by a democratic majority at the expense of the minority with considerable possessions.¹

¹ It might almost be compared with the 'forced benevolences' of old English history.

On the other hand, it was quite true that the large land-owners, and particularly the absentees, were a drag on the colonisation of Australasia. Their too great possessions throttled the development of the colonies, and it is a sound maxim that the health of the community is the supreme law. It was only unfortunate that the community, being its own doctor, should have sent in such an extremely long bill to those whom it forced to take its nauseous prescription. The ideal, perhaps even the more effective course, would have been the general purchase of the large estates by compulsory arbitration;¹ but it is doubtful whether this heroic and expensive remedy would have been within the resources of the already heavily indebted Commonwealth and Dominion.

The finish of the struggle between landless democrat and the landed and wealthy if untitled aristocrat, was still far in the future; but more immediately successful than the Closer Settlement Policy was the political doctrine which became identified with the name of White Australia.² Acclaimed as a 'gospel,' and as heartily believed by its adherents, it excluded the cheap Asiatic labour that would in time have driven out European labour from the antipodes, and by putting the distant national advantage above the immediate commercial profit, it secured the future of Australia as a country for the white working-man as well as for the white master.

The White
Australia
Policy.

But the White Australia policy was merely the beginning, the foundation, the essential text of a larger fuller gospel of social betterment that was preached and accepted by a large following in the antipodes towards the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. That gospel may be called briefly the gospel of happiness and comfort.

Its
Correlative
Internal
Social De-
velopments.

¹ That course was taken with complete success in Prince Edward Island (vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. ii.). But what is practicable statesmanship on a small island is often impossible on a continent.

² See bk. xx. ch. iii.

It was an attempt to translate into actual fact many misty aspirations for the improvement of the lot of mankind ; it was in effect an effort, and often a noble effort, to make the struggle for existence less severe, to replace the competition of man in the old world by the co-operation of man in the new. It was a belief held with a fervour that raised it to the dignity of a crusade—a crusade whose purpose it was to keep up a higher standard of life in Australasia than prevailed elsewhere.¹

The fullest political expression of that belief was given by M'Gowen, a labour leader of New South Wales, in 1901. 'Labour has for its ideal,' he said, 'the shortening of the hours of labour of the people in a civilised community, and giving them more opportunity of having leisure and pleasure in their lives. And when one realises that at the best life is only a mere passing existence, full of trouble and worry and cares, the more brightness one can instil into the lives of individual members of the community, the better work they can do as the people of that community. We want every man, even if he brings only one talent to the service of his fellows, to live in happiness and comfort.'

These comfortable words, and others of like import, which came to inspire a large and influential body of opinion in Australasia, were at bottom nothing more than a wider expression of that sentiment which began to move England, and in a less degree other European countries, in the later eighteenth century, and which I have ventured to call the New Humanity.² It was a feeling of sorrow and pity for the poor and the oppressed, a feeling that at its highest reached almost to the divine compassion of the gentle Christ who suffered with the sick and sorrowed with the suffering, a feeling akin to that which had been felt by the Buddha when he found the human pain and tribulation he had not thought to see.³

¹ London *Times*, 4th April 1902.

² Vol. ii. bk. viii. ch. i.

³ Vol. ii. bk. vi. ch. ii.

But in England, where it originated, the New Humanity had been directed mainly to the relief of the other and less fortunate races. It had struck off the chains and fetters of the negro slave; it had rebuked oppression in India; it had preached the gospel of peace and love, so far as lay within its power, to all mankind. But while it had achieved these things abroad, at home and in England it had done little to relieve the poor and destitute, the weak and needy; England was held fast in the harsh efficiency of the new Industrial Age¹—efficiency that took no note of the social wreckage broken on its unceasing mill—the employers waged fierce battle with each other for wealth, the employees waged fierce battle with each other for employment and wages, whose normal tendency to rise was constantly kept down by the surplus of men seeking employment.²

It happened that much of this human surplus, bruised and wounded in the struggle for life, made its way, or was assisted to make its way, to the British colonies and the United States.³ In America the same stern conditions of human strife had begun to prevail as in England, when factories were founded in Massachusetts and skyscrapers raised hideous heads to heaven in New York City and Chicago; but in Australia, remote from the old world, and with a population that was small and did not grow very rapidly, it found less competition, and consequently more favourable conditions.

**Australia
rejects the
Current
English
Political
Economy.**

¹ When the two forces, of the New Humanity and the New Industry, met, the results were sometimes curious. The missionaries often pointed out that the conversion of the Pacific Islanders and the African negroes would redound, not only to the glory of God, but to the profit of the British merchant; and that excellent person sometimes subscribed to the funds of missionary societies with that end in view. The missionaries taught the natives everywhere to assume European clothing—imported, like religion, from England.

² For the Industrial Age in England, see vol. iv. bk. xvi.

³ I have given so many instances of unemployment in England leading to emigration that I need here only refer to vol. iii. bk. xi. ch. iii., and to the account of the Wakefield settlements in the present volume, bk. xviii. ch. iii. and bk. xxi. ch. ii.

The struggle for life was slowed by the very fact of Australia's position on the map.

And the first action of this surplus, when it had organised itself into class consciousness, was to rebel against the conditions which had driven it from the old world. There the work was of greater consequence than the worker; in Australia it was determined that the worker should be of greater consequence than the work. The New Humanity of England had decreed that the welfare of the slave was of greater value than the sugar he trod or the cotton he picked; the New Humanity transplanted to Australia declared that the welfare of the white workman was of more moment than the produce of his hands.¹

The whole mental attitude of Australia towards this side of life was in fact a revolt against the harsh strife of the Industrial Age in England, a contradiction of the current politico-economic teaching of the day. Those who had suffered on the battlefield of industry in Britain determined to make for themselves a haven of peace in Australia.

In very many ways this revolt made itself felt. The old English theory of competition held that both master and man should have full freedom of contract, each to make the best bargain with the other that he could. The penniless emigrant who was assisted to a new life in Australia knew by bitter experience that this freedom was a fiction, a cruel lie that pressed heavily on the economically less powerful bargainer; the workman had in most cases to accept the employer's

¹ 'If a man cannot maintain his enterprise without cutting down the wages which are proper to be paid to his employees—at all events that are essential to their living—it would be better that he should abandon the enterprise.'—Judgment of Commonwealth Court of Conciliation, 1909.

Extremes meet. The Manchester school in England, from which Australians had revolted, held that if an industry could not be maintained without protection, it had better be abandoned. The real difference was that they thought of the consumer, Australians of the producer.

terms, or face the impossible alternative of unemployment and starvation. And the Australian therefore determined to cast aside that tradition of old England in the building of the new English nation in the South Seas ; the workman was to be protected against the stronger party to the bargain.

The Australian saw that the leading English politicians and economists deprecated the intervention of the Government in commercial and industrial affairs. He saw the many abuses which sprang from that theory in England and America, where the same conception prevailed ; and when, therefore, he found himself in a land whose future was still to shape by human hands, he turned a favourable eye on Government intervention. The Australian believed in enlarging the power of the State very largely because the Englishman at home believed in limiting that power ; the Australian believed in co-operation very largely because the Englishman believed in individualism.

Again, the Australian saw that the English workman lost much when he was not organised, and gained something when he was organised, in one of those trade unions which the English law for long refused to recognise. The Australian worker therefore organised himself into powerful trade unions, whose strict discipline made for strength ; and when a Labour Party arose in this political democracy in the last decade of the nineteenth century, it too was organised and drilled as no political party had ever been organised before.¹

Australian democracy lost much, but it gained more, by this action ; it tended to crush individual ability, but it gained cohesion and driving power. The trade unions were often tyrannical, and sometimes their tyranny was such

¹ Every member had to take a pledge to obey the will of the majority, which meant in effect always to vote as directed by the heads of the party.

as to set independent public opinion against them, and even to endanger the public peace ;¹ the Labour Party in politics tended to crush out the ideas of its members, to make them obedient units rather than independent members ; but it was the strength of the organisations that emerged from this discipline which gave them victory. A body of men without discipline is a mob that can do nothing ; with discipline it is an army that can do almost anything.

The first generation of labourers, it is true, had matters very much their own way in Australasia. ' There are eight hours for sleep, eight hours for labour, and men require some little time for themselves,' said one of the pioneer labourers in Wellington ; ' therefore there must be eight hours for recreation.' The would-be employer laughed at the man, but there were none other to do the work, and the labourer had his way.² The eight-hour day became a recognised institution, an accomplished fact rather than an ideal, in the skilled handicrafts of Australia.

The importation of cheap labour was constantly advocated by the employers ; but the increasing strength of the White Australia doctrine prevented the immigration of the cheapest of all labour, that of Asiatics, in the temperate regions where

¹ In one of the Queensland strikes, outrage and arson were resorted to ; in a strike in Victoria, the whole railway service was to be brought to a standstill—a threat which was promptly dealt with by the Government. A general strike, a more modern weapon than the old sectional strike, was declared in Brisbane in 1912 in consequence of a petty dispute on the tramways ; but the trade union minority which had threatened society failed against the united action of town and country.

Sometimes, however, the Government quailed before the trade unions. Once when the shearers in New South Wales struck work, the Attorney-General of the State lacked the courage to admit the fact, and declared that ' The shearers have not left their work. They have only refused to begin,'—a piece of legal casuistry that at once became famous. The name of the author of this stupendous quibble should be immortal ; it was Bernhard R. Wise. He subsequently wrote a book on Australia, but modestly omitted to mention therein his own contribution to the world's wit.

² The incident is related in Drummond's *Life of Seddon*.

the white workman lived. And while Australian industry was steadily expanding, it was in many trades a question of employers finding employees rather than of employees seeking employers.

But even under these favoured conditions, there were some who fell below the average of efficiency. Not worth employing at the high wages in force, they had to accept what employment they could get at whatever price was offered; their own helplessness, in fact, caused them to be rated even lower than their real value. The sweater, that horrid parasite who feeds and fattens on the defenceless members of his own species, fastened on various employments, particularly on the clothing and furniture trades; and about the year 1882 public opinion in the antipodes was shocked to find that the creation of a submerged class after the European model was in active development.

The evil symptom of unhealthy growth, exposed by the newspapers, was at once vigorously attacked; but for more than ten years one expedient after another was tried, only to collapse, mainly through the difficulty of protecting those who were too weak to protect themselves; but during those years democracy learnt to organise itself. Such victories as the trade unions had in the fight for better conditions were an encouragement to further advance; the defeats—and they outnumbered the victories in the years immediately before and after 1893, when a financial crisis overwhelmed hundreds of employers and workmen alike—were lessons in the method of perfecting the organisation.

But the democracy sought a political solution of the question. 'A weapon,' said Seddon in New Zealand in 1890, 'has been placed in men's hands in this colony, and if they use that weapon at the coming general election, they will do a great deal towards restoring the colony to a more prosperous condition. The remedy lies with the people. They will find it in the ballot-box.' The political power of

the majority, in short, was to make up for their economic weakness.¹

The broad hint was taken. The now thoroughly organised democracy, which was in a position to exercise its power in most of the Australasian colonies after the elections of 1890 and 1891, was in many respects in an enviable situation. Except in New South Wales, the one British colony which had followed the free-trade policy of Britain, the infant industries of Australasia were protected by tariffs from outside competition; the workmen were protected from inside competition by exclusion laws against cheap Asiatic labour. And the assisted immigration of settlers from Europe was also opposed by the trade unions, since that would have resulted in competition; for twenty years the flow of new colonists to the antipodes practically ceased. The new democracy not only held the field; it enclosed it with a fence which few could pass.

There were two aspects to its activities—the ideal and the practical; the former led by utopian thinkers whose schemes were sometimes tried and often failed; the latter led by men who knew exactly what they wanted, and in many cases achieved their ends.

One of the first results of the increasing power of the democracy in the legislatures was that a series of Factory Acts was passed in most of the colonies, which insisted that cleanliness and sufficient air should be ensured to every factory worker; that the construction and appointments of every factory should be

¹ It is pointed out in St. Ledger's *Australian Socialism* that very much the same thing was said in the *Brisbane Worker*, a Socialist journal, a few months before. It would not be the first time that the same thought had occurred to two independent people almost simultaneously.

Over twenty years later, when Lloyd George was British Chancellor of the Exchequer, he remarked that 'it had taken (Britain) forty-five years to realise the enormous lifting power of the engine of which they obtained the control by the franchise.' The same doctrine, in slightly different words.

approved by Government inspectors; that every factory should be registered by the State, and its equipment approved before registration was allowed. Any place where six, four, or, in one colony, even one, person was employed, was considered to be a factory.

These provisions were accompanied or followed by regulations forbidding any child under thirteen years of age to be employed, and stating that the hours of labour for women and children under sixteen should not be more than forty-five per week, and that the hours for men should not exceed forty-eight per week. In cases where overtime was required to be worked through pressure of business, the government inspector could give a permissory certificate when satisfied of its necessity.

Other regulations were made to deal with offices and shops; but this aspect of social reform was more difficult, because, as one colonial politician ingenuously remarked, shopkeepers were so much more numerous than factory-owners that their votes had to be seriously considered. It is one of the incidental disadvantages of triumphant democracy that it may revolt its own supporters; dogs have been known to eat their own tails ere now.

The thorny subject, however, was bravely tackled; timid legislators consoled themselves with the reflection that if shopkeepers were numerous and might possibly vote against them, shop-assistants were more numerous and would certainly vote for them. A complicated series of laws indicated the hours at which shops, offices, and banks should be closed. Certain exceptions were dictated by policy or interest,¹ and the net result of the change was not that less business was done, but that the same business was done in fewer hours.

More daring innovations were those which established a

¹ Offices engaged in transport work were excepted; apothecaries, subject to certain conditions, and newspaper shops. Politicians cannot afford to lose the support of the press; the press cannot afford to lose its customers. Hence the exception in their favour.

minimum wage in certain trades ; wages boards composed of masters and men in equal numbers, with an impartial president to decide the rates of wages, in others ;¹ and a compulsory arbitration law to prevent strikes and lock-outs, which was passed in New Zealand in 1894, and subsequently imitated in various other colonies.

These enactments were for the able-bodied and active ; but democracy was not merely concerned with the young and the fit, it busied itself likewise with the old and feeble.² 'It is equitable,' said the Parliament of New South Wales in 1900, 'that deserving persons who during the prime of life have helped to bear the public burdens of the colony by the payment of taxes, and by opening up its resources with their labour and skill, should receive from the colony pensions in their old age.' The Old Age Pensions Act of that state, framed on a non-contributory basis, came into force in 1901. New Zealand had already been the pioneer with a similar law, passed three years previously by the Seddon Cabinet.

¹ Those who objected to the state regulation of wages on the ground that it had always failed in England, were faced with the answer that in Australia it had abolished sweating in three years. As a fact, it had not always failed in England, but the parallel was not accurate.

The general principle was laid down in the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration in 1909. 'I cannot conceive,' said the President of that Court, 'of an industrial dispute being settled effectively which fails to secure the labourer enough wherewith to renew his strength and to maintain his home from day to day. He will dispute, he must dispute, until he gets his head above the water. . . . In finding the living wage I look therefore to find what money is necessary to satisfy the normal needs of the average employee regarded as a human being living in a civilised community.' The actual amount determined on was fixed at seven shillings a day.

No living wage was fixed by any tribunal in Britain, but some English economists recommended that it should be considered as not less than twenty-four shillings a week. Prices averaging much the same in England and Australia, the two amounts give perhaps a fair comparison between the status of labour in the two countries. The average wages of skilled workmen in both cases were of course much higher.

² Incidentally, too, the old and feeble were voters. Australian politicians were honourably free from corruption ; but they were human. And the politician has a touching faith in the gratitude of the voter for past favours that is not always well founded.

The general effect of this legislation was variously estimated. There was a considerable and able body of opinion in Australia which distrusted the whole trend of the policy of state action and co-operation ; but the authors of the experimental laws were ever ready to carry on a controversy in their own defence. But it was quite evident to onlookers that the disputants on current and recent policy could not determine the ultimate effect of the measures which they approved or condemned ; and it was the ultimate effects, not the immediate benefits or difficulties, of the policy which alone could determine its wisdom.¹

The more immediate results of the legislation may be easily summarised. The laws regulating industry certainly raised the cost of living by increasing the cost and diminishing the output of the labourer. They admittedly pressed rather hardly in certain directions, for since the employer was compelled to pay good wages he took care only to employ good workmen ;² the indifferent were not worth employing at all. In these directions, therefore, the laws tended strongly to increased cost, probably less strongly to increased efficiency ; to diminished hours of labour ; and therefore to diminished output.³

The compulsory arbitration laws⁴ discouraged, if they did

¹ The best views on either side are in *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand*, by W. Pember Reeves, sometime member of the Seddon Cabinet, in which he was responsible for the law of compulsory arbitration ; later Agent-General for New Zealand in London, and subsequently head of the London School of Economics ; an ardent but sane advocate of State action. The other side may be seen in *Australian Socialism*, by A. St. Ledger, a Commonwealth senator who writes with much force.

² There were provisions in the minimum wage law, and in other Acts, permitting the employer to pay less than the statute wage to workers incapable of doing the average of work.

³ Statistics have been published on these points. They have been useful to controversial disputants intent on proving a case ; they are hardly conclusive enough for the cautious judgment of history.

⁴ Voluntary arbitration laws had been passed, and had failed. The age was one indeed in which the voluntary principle, once so highly esteemed in England, was losing its force.

not abolish, strikes ; but they were charged with increasing the number of petty and irritating industrial disputes between master and man, and with giving an opportunity to the agitator of bringing continual cases before the arbitral boards on the chance of a favourable decision. There was some truth in this objection ; but, even so, that was not necessarily a fundamental flaw. It is conceivable that a small ailment of frequent occurrence may be less harmful to the industrial, as to the physical, body than a terrible and almost fatal malady of rare occurrence. On the whole, the Arbitration Acts were a success, but not an unqualified success ; but they might have been more of a success had they been more popular at the start with the masters and less popular with the men ; or later, had they been less popular with the masters and more popular with the men ;¹ but in later years, when the trade unionists wished to foment a strike and agitated for the repeal of the Acts which tied their hands, these had so far proved their usefulness that independent public opinion insisted on their retention in the statute-book.

But admittedly Australasia could not compete with foreign labour which was not bound by these restrictive regulations ; she might export her natural products, she could never export her manufactured articles, save to territories, such as Papua, under her own control. How far Australasia could have competed with other countries under other conditions could never be ascertained ; but the real gain to the English people in the antipodes, the gain for which they had bound themselves by such strict regulations, could also not be definitely ascertained. The increase in the general measure of pleasure and comfort cannot be reckoned in statistics ;² the improve-

¹ The explanation is simple. The awards were at first mainly in favour of the employees ; but when wages had been raised by this means the awards after a time went largely in favour of the employers, and the employees sometimes refused to accept them.

² A German traveller, Count Fritz von Hochberg (*An Eastern Voyage ; a Journal of Travels through the British Empire*, 1910), doubted the happiness of Australian life. He remarked that the people showed

ment which was looked for in the national physique could not be accurately determined until a full generation had been brought up under those conditions.

One test, indeed, may be applied. If long life is in truth a boon—and perhaps few of those that have not been unduly strained upon the rack of human fate will deny **Human Life** it¹—then Australasia was indeed happy. The **Prolonged.** death-rates and indices of mortality in all the states of the Commonwealth and in New Zealand were the lowest of any civilised countries in the world;² and, low as they were, they had decreased since the new gospel of comfort and happiness had been sought, despite the fact that the actual average age of the population had increased.³ Shorter hours and better conditions of labour, the assurance of a fair wage in working years and a decent pension at the close of active labour, had begun to show their effect. The easier conditions of existence told their own story; the struggle for life had

‘insolent, dogged, daring, bad-tempered, sulky expressions, half assumed to hide the pathetic, yearning unhappiness in their faces, yearning for colour to rest their tired eyes on, green fields and fresh foliage, and a cheery, happy country in this land of desolation.’ The author had been one day in Australia when he drew this character; but subsequent experience did not induce him to modify his opinion, which was not, however, confirmed by the experience of other travellers or by Australians themselves.

¹ The historian Lecky, however, laid it down as his opinion in that extremely interesting but little appreciated book, *The Map of Life*, that life is long enough as it is. But historians are not, as a rule, a long-lived class. The search for truth in time exhausts the strongest constitution.

² The death-rates in 1909 were: New Zealand, 9·2 per 1000; Australia, 10·2; Norway, 14·5; Ontario, 14·8; United Kingdom, 15·1; German Empire, 18·0; France, 19·0; Japan, 20·9; European Russia, 30·0.

³ The index of mortality, the most accurate way of ascertaining the actual death-rate, had fallen between 1902 and 1909:—

In New South Wales from	15·45 to 13·44.
In Victoria	„ 15·89 to 13·74.
In Queensland	„ 15·85 to 13·80.
In South Australia	„ 15·12 to 12·57.
In West Australia	„ 17·66 to 15·07.
In Tasmania	„ 14·26 to 13·14.

In New Zealand, taking the figures for the year 1908, they were the lowest of all, 11·67.

indeed been slowed, and human life had thereby been prolonged.

The democratic majority in Australia on the whole approved these legislative experiments and applauded their results.

The Communist Movement. But there was a party, an active minority of this majority, not without power, for whom these laws, which were sufficiently novel to draw the attention of the rest of the world, were altogether too mild a revolution. They saw and approved the idea of co-operation among the whole community ; but they would have gone still further and proclaimed general communism, a sharing of all goods and all labour in common for the public advantage.

A brilliant journalist, William Lane, Canadian by birth, English by extraction, Australian by adoption, preached this gospel week by week in a Brisbane newspaper, *The Worker*, whose motto was ' Socialism in Our Time ' ; and he found no lack of followers. Able and eager, an active propagandist of a cause he passionately believed, the fluent and persuasive style of his literary work easily convinced those who were not unwilling to be convinced that a new heaven could be created out of the old earth when men held all their goods in common, worked each for all and all for each, and pooled the results of their labour for the common benefit. While the world lasts there will always be such spirits ; and while the world is as it is they will always fail.¹

Communism is an attractive creed, in some ways even a noble creed ; at least it rates human nature high. Too high, indeed ; for the ruck of mankind will work for its own advantage, and for no other end. Such was the lesson of previous

¹ The Pilgrim Fathers began as a communistic community, but speedily abandoned it (vol. i. bk. ii. ch. ii.). A similar experiment was tried at Brook Farm on a larger scale in 1847, and abandoned.

I need hardly mention the communistic experiment among the early Christians. It failed ; but I do not know that the advocates of individualism have much the best of the argument from that case, for Ananias and Sapphira, both convinced individualists, had a worse fate than the communists.

experiments in communism ; William Lane's own enterprise showed no different result.

A number of enthusiasts, converted by his teaching, followed him in the year 1893 to found a New Australia in Paraguay.¹ A large estate, nearly half a million acres in extent, well watered, heavily timbered, and very fertile, had been granted to the promoters of the enterprise by the Government of that Republic ; nearly £30,000 was subscribed by the disciples of the movement—and every adherent was bound to cast all his possessions into the common treasury—and all were equally pledged to do all they could for the common cause, as ' free men and women on their own free land.'

The constitution of the community declared that all land, tools, and means of production in exchange and distribution should be held in common ; the community was to save all the capital it needed for its enterprises, and the surplus wealth was to be equally divided, without regard to sex, age, office, or physical or mental capacity ; the children were to be maintained and educated by the community under the guardianship of their parents.²

The sexes were to have equal political rights, and a ballot vote of all adult members was to be the supreme authority of the community ; a director, elected by a two-thirds majority of the general ballot, was to be the sole executive authority, but all regulations affecting the community at large were to be confirmed by a two-thirds majority of all adult members—a form of referendum which was further modified by the provision that all regulations were to be submitted annually to the popular vote, and all offices were to be vacated annually, or whenever the holders ceased to retain the confidence of their constituents.

¹ See also vol. iv. bk. xii. ch. i.

² Lane did not, like some socialistic and communistic thinkers, hold with the possession of women and children in common. I imagine that few, save the bachelor and the hen-pecked husband, go so far.

Disputes were to be settled by an arbitrator mutually agreed upon ; but ' the individuality of every member in thought, religion, speech, and leisure, and in all matters whatsoever whereby the individuality of others was not affected, was to be held inviolable.'

Such was the imposing machinery of a constitution which was never given a chance of working. One of the first acts of Lane, even before the new settlement was
Its Failure. founded, or even reached, was to suspend the constitution he had drawn up ; and, armed as he was with proxies from intending settlers in Australia who were to follow the first party in due course, none could dispute the unexpected and unwelcome revolution in Paraguay. And one of the first acts of some of his followers on landing in South America was to get drunk ; thereby breaking a regulation which bound all to abstain from intoxicating liquor until the initial difficulties of settlement had been overcome, and proving by indisputable evidence to sober but envious colleagues in the common enterprise that some at least had proved unfaithful to the pledge that all private property should be cast into the common stock.

Thus was sown the seed of distrust and dissension where all should have been peace and love ; absolutism reigned where freedom had been promised, and jealousy thrust her jaundiced head where all should have worked for the common good. The colonists came to found a Utopia, said one who visited them a few months later, and they had only succeeded, to use their own words, in creating a hell upon earth.¹

Many now abandoned a place where failure was already seen to be inevitable ; a schism of opinion divided those who remained ; but when it was found that Lane had reserved the best ground in the territory for himself and a few chosen friends, the indignation and resentment of the wretched

¹ M. de C. Findlay, *Foreign Office Report*, 1894 (No. 1357) ; see also *Foreign Office Report* for 1895 (No. 358) for later information.

communists whom he had deceived knew no limits. A special revelation from heaven, it was asserted, had assured Lane of the justice of his action ; but it had, unhappily, omitted to convince his disillusioned disciples.

In these miserable circumstances, deserted by a leader whom they no longer trusted, and surrounded by converts in whose sincerity they no longer believed, the remainder of the colonists, half starved, hardly clad, and badly housed, struggled on for a while under an elective Board of Management, which had neither authority nor capacity, business instinct, nor administrative ability.

But the disastrous end of the experiment was at hand. Many had bought their experience dearly, and had already left this New Australia once more for the old ; others, with shattered hopes and bruised ideals, remained in Paraguay, reluctant perverts from the communistic creed they had recently believed. They were generously assisted to begin life anew by the Government of the Republic ; but henceforth communism was abandoned, and each man profited from the fruits of his labour.¹

If there were no more communists in Paraguay there were still some enthusiasts for the ideal in Australia, whose faith had not received the rude shock of practical experience. And these might well have attributed some, if not all, the responsibility for the collapse of the New Australia movement to the personality and not the principles of its founder ; they might have pointed out with some force, had not the topic been too painful, that Lane's character had clearly changed with the initial success of his scheme, and that it was largely his own unbalanced ambition which had ruined it and him. The suspension of the constitution before it was inaugurated, the attempted tyranny over those who had been promised

¹ Lane himself left Paraguay for England before the final change. Eventually he settled in New Zealand. He still posed as a prophet of labour, but he seems never to have gained another following.

full freedom, and the subsequent justificatory vision from heaven had had a share in destroying whatever chance of success the settlement might have had ; but these defects might have killed any enterprise and any leader.

But the village settlements which were founded in Australia during the same period on communistic principles showed

**Commun-
istic Settle-
ments in
Australia,
1894.** much the same defects as the notorious enterprise in Paraguay. The South Australian Government was the pioneer of these enterprises, which were begun in the year 1894 for the benefit of unemployed townsmen of that colony. A large tract of good country was set aside for their use along the Murray River ; money was advanced from the State, stock and seeds were provided by the interested but rather sceptical farmers of the district. The head of every family received an allotment of ample size, for the cultivation of which he was responsible ; but every member of the community was to help the other ; each was to work for all, and all for each, after the approved communistic doctrine.

The official figures of the experiment supply their own comment. In 1894 there were eleven settlements. In 1897 eight remained. In 1898 only four still survived. In 1910 there were but three, and two of these were to be abandoned. The number of settlers had shrunk from 1700 to 182. None had ever proved very successful ; a few had held their own for a while ; the majority failed rather badly.¹

A private writer, not unfavourable to the principle on which these communes were founded, deplored the intolerable friction and the continual quarrels between their members ; ² even in the sedate language of an official report it was admitted that the settlers could not agree among themselves. Bickering

¹ *Parliamentary Papers*, South Australia, 1897-8-9, 1908-9-10-11, each under heading 'Village Settlement.'

² W. Pember Reeves's *State Experiments*. There is an account of the beginning of these settlements in Michael Davitt's *Life and Progress in Australasia* ; a useful work.

was the chief occupation of every village; and it was observed, as a strange anomaly, that those who had been helped by the State could not even help each other.

The communal system, in fact, proved a failure. It was said that the village settlements were composed of bad settlers, and the unsuccessful townsman is certainly not the ideal raw material from which the successful farmer is evolved;¹ but the single excuse will not cover the general failure, and it is significant that the one change in the constitution of these settlements that was seriously advocated as giving them a real chance of success was the introduction of a new rule, by which each settler should receive the due reward of his own labour. Here, as in Paraguay, it was the shirker and the work-shy who profited from the labour of his fellows.²

Had these experimental village settlements succeeded they might have changed the history of the world and the future of humanity, for they were intended to replace the immemorial struggle between human beings—a struggle so generally wasteful, so commonly brutal, so frequently harsh, demoralising, and palpably against the best interests of the community—by a system of mutual help and brotherly love. Such was the beautiful ideal, and I for one can only regret that frail human nature was unequal to the task it set itself. But in practice it was found that communism led to more quarrelling and less work than the old individual conflict; and when the village settlements came to an unlamented end, so weary were their promoters of the incessant friction that not a Government inspector shed a departmental tear, not even a Government printer risked a larger type for the official announcement of the demise.

¹ The recent experience of farm colonies for the unemployed in England may be cited as additional proof of a rather evident proposition.

² H. G. Wells remarks somewhere in one of his essays that the shirker will always contrive to live on the labour of others. True; but it is only in the close, regular, and intimate association of communism that the unpleasant fact is so clearly visible.

If communism failed, co-operation came by its own. Quite early in their history, Australians found that they could borrow the capital they needed to develop their resources more cheaply on the security of the whole community than on the security of a private company of individual settlers. This was in itself a strong incentive to co-operation and State action, to which the British in the antipodes were not in any sense opposed on general principles.

The first Australian railways were begun, indeed, by private enterprise, as in England, the United States, and Canada. But the unfortunate companies were bankrupt before they had succeeded in running a single train in the antipodes; and since railways were a necessity if the continent was to develop, the various states were forced to pledge their credit and undertake the work.¹

The control of the means of communication by the State was thus brought about by accident rather than design. But in other matters the State undertook more definite functions advisedly and with full understanding of the road on which it was travelling. Some of the Australian Governments actively assisted the poorer settlers; experimental farms were established for the trial of suitable crops, and help was freely given to those who desired it. The State in time undertook the inspection and grading of farmers' products according to quality, and its guarantee was soon of recognised value to producer and purchaser alike. And in some instances the State even granted a bonus on certain products and manufactures which it wished to encourage.²

Each of these developments of State policy was directly in favour of the small man. The great agriculturist,

¹ Unfortunately in those early days—the first Australian railway was not opened until 1855—the various states had not yet learned the need of co-operation with each other. Each built its railways with a different gauge, to the endless inconvenience and expense of the public.

² The State of Victoria, for instance, granted a bonus on butter production.

pastoralist, or manufacturer can set up his own standard and guarantee it, and establish his own experimental farm ; the smaller man is dependent on united action. And since co-operation with his fellows and with the State did not destroy his direct interest in his own labour as communism had done, since it served as a convenient halfway house between the sheer individualism which persisted in England and the full communism which had failed in Australia, it came to play an important and successful part in the building of industry in the antipodes.

And co-operation harmonised well with the general trend of Australasian policy in its attempt to substitute united and corporate action for the individual conflicts and competition of other lands. The struggle for life, and the eternal fighting of man against man in the northern world, had been slowed from the first by the distance and remoteness of the south ; it was still further slowed when the state regulation of industries and co-operation found their recognised place in the economy of Australia.

But not entirely could man make himself superior to the conditions in which he worked. If communism failed from lack of faith in himself and in others, the co-operation of the many small men did not destroy the advantage of the few who operated on a larger scale ; and from time to time forces other than human, still potent and untamed, crossed and perhaps in part destroyed the path which man had hewed for himself through the thicket of human circumstance. For nature herself would not always co-operate with man. The struggle for life had been slowed by man's own efforts ; but a visitation of nature, a prolonged drought or sudden flood, at once renewed and enlarged it on a vaster and more terrible scale against a far more pitiless adversary. Soil and climate, rainless skies and pitiless sun, sometimes fought against man in the antipodes with a blind enmity that man himself could never equal ;

Variations
due to
Soil and
Climate.

and this bitter struggle for life against nature itself introduced a further variation in the character of the new English nation from that of old England than was due to merely human circumstance—a variation due to soil and climate, and their unceasing but unhurrying action in moulding man to suit his environment.

Australia was at once a harsh and a kindly mistress. Almost any one might prosper on her soil—for a while ; but a drought knocked out all but the strong, and many even of the strong went down before a long period of rainless years. Those who survived had learnt their lesson—it was no easy one—for the struggle had bitten into them a power of resistance which formed the very backbone of the people ; they were men who could fight a losing fight in which all the odds were against them, while creeks and pools and rivers dried, stock and pasture died, and all the land lay still in silent suffering as beneath a curse from God.

But when the rains came at last, and the rivers filled again, the recovery was quick ; and those who had outlasted the drought had gained something for their losses. They might have lost thousands of sheep and cattle, and have almost to start life afresh ; but they had gained a hardness and resilience of character, a habit of stoic endurance in the time of trial, that no unbroken prosperity could ever have given. They had wrestled with drought and despair and not been worsted.

‘ Pallid of face and gaunt of limb,
The sweetness withered out of him.
Sombre, indomitable, wan,
The juices dried, the glad youth gone.’

So an Australian poet ¹ described the man who had fought a pitiless drought to the end. It might be a true picture ; but it was not a complete picture. Glad youth might indeed be gone ; but in its place was a man capable of enduring the

¹ A. H. Adams’s *The Australian*.

hardest knocks of fate, of giving blow for blow, and of getting the last blow in himself. Such men, who had fought with nature and not been conquered, had an individuality and strength of purpose that no struggle for economic equality could ever deprive them of.

Political liberty was an inherited instinct among the British in Australia, social liberty the gift of circumstance, economic equality the unavailing struggle of two generations. But it was the sheer necessity of the many small men holding together against the few strong men that had made democracy so compelling a force in Australia. The Commonwealth owed its land laws and much of its other legislation to the enforced unity of its democratic organisation; and this again emphasised its variation from the parent stock in Britain, where in the nineteenth century no such unity of purpose prevailed among the new-born democracy.

Unity of
Australian
Democracy
gives it
Strength.

In England democracy was not merely distrusted by the governing classes and the old aristocracy; it distrusted itself. The contemporary denunciations of the party system in the mother country, with its obvious waste, its conscious unfairness, and its avoidance of vital issues were, in fact, nothing more than rather timorous methods of condemning popular rule. Men on both sides of politics uttered complaints not only of their opponents—that was an old story—but of their own party, and spoke rather sorrowfully of a generally decreasing grip of principle and an increasing urgency of vote-catching cries. The complaints were directed in form against the party system, because few politicians had the courage or the insight directly to question the virtues of popular government; but, none the less, the complaints were in reality directed against popular government itself.

If in Australia there was no such distrust of popular government, it was not because popular government furnished a perfect method of ruling an imperfect world, but because

there was here no avoidance of vital issues. The fact that the struggle between squatter and small farmer, between old pastoral aristocrat and new agricultural democrat, was fought on economic lines gave it life.¹

The whole future of the English people in the antipodes was bound up in the demand for the division of the great estates, for the closer settlement of the small farmer on the land, and for the maintenance of a White Australia and all that it implied. It was for these three things that Australasian democracy came to stand ; and it was from the insistence on these three things that it drew its strength.

But while Australian democracy derived its strength from the principles, vital to the Commonwealth, for which it came to stand, those very principles tended to differentiate it in essentials from the democratic movement in the rest of the world. The Australian admired the democratic American citizen and the constitution of the United States ;² but the specialised form of democracy which developed in the antipodes was altogether different from that which had taken root in the great English republic.

The American democrat held it a self-evident truth that all men were born free and equal ;³ the Australian saw that not all men were free, and that the equality which the American proclaimed in theory had no existence in fact.⁴

¹ It may be noticed that this democratic unity did not prevail in purely political questions such as federation (bk. xix. ch. iii.). Discussion on that topic was necessarily rather academic and philosophic and much more remote from the public attention than matters, such as the minimum wage, which touched daily life ; hence the public indifference.

² See bk. xix. ch. iii.

³ See the Declaration of Independence, quoted in vol. iii. bk. ix. ch. iv. A good many Americans in time came to question this self-evident truth laid down by Thomas Jefferson, the putative parent of modern democracy.

An ancient and somewhat musty lie declares that the truth is great and will prevail ; apparently it does not refer to the Jeffersonian variety.

⁴ Indeed, Jefferson was a slave-owner at the very time when he penned the celebrated sentence. But it is fair to say that he disliked the system.

The American democrat welcomed every man as his brother and his equal, and invited all mankind to cross the ample threshold of the United States; the Australian democrat, who saw the grave inconveniences attending on this excessive hospitality, rejected every man who was not of European descent, and even then he again introduced the principle of selection and exclusion among Europeans.

It was a profound conviction with those who were watching, and to some limited extent controlling, the formation of the new Australasian nations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that in order to obtain good results they must use good materials. They knew that a great deal of human rubble as well as sound human bricks had gone to the building of the United States, and the results of a century's labour in the making of the Republic were admitted by many thoughtful Americans to be unfortunate; and Australians therefore determined to guard against the danger of using every heterogeneous human material in the delicate and difficult task of building their own Commonwealth.

The
Australian
Nation
built upon
Selection
and
Exclusion.

It was the first principle of those who engaged in this task that Australasia could support, and indeed required for her advance, a larger population than existed at that time in the antipodes. That principle could not be denied by anybody acquainted with the conditions in Australia and New Zealand.¹

The second principle hardly obtained unanimous assent. It opened with the obvious and incontrovertible statement that the distance of the antipodes from the great centres of the world's population prevented any large flow of immigration thither, such as was irrigating the waste spaces of the United States with a great human river year by year. If

¹ It was denied, however, by many of the Australasian trade unions, who feared that the arrival of more immigrants would reduce the high rate of wages. Their influence in opposing assisted immigration was considerable between 1890 and 1910, but the Commonwealth in time woke up to the urgency of the need for more population.

immigrants were desired in Australasia they must be attracted by the offer of inducements, a free passage, a free title to land, or kindred privileges.

But if Australasian statesmen had to offer special inducements to attract the population they desired, that very fact gave them the opportunity to pick and choose their men. And this led directly to the practical application of the second principle.

Selection implies exclusion : those who confer a gift have the right to withhold it from the unworthy. And the men whom Australasia assisted had to be of sound and strong physique, of British descent or easily assimilable in a British community, men who would fall into line with their fellow-citizens in social and political activities, and not tend to form a state within a state, a population within a population.

Australasia refused to purchase her industrial development at the price of a permanent politico-racial problem in the shape of a large alien element. She would have no immigrants of non-European blood, working for a low wage, keeping out white workmen, and in time controlling by steady weight of numbers the labouring market ; she determined to protect herself against their competition by a tariff and penal laws, while she assisted white men and women approved by her agents-general in London to settle in her territories.¹

By this means, by using only the best materials available in the white world, and by securing them the best conditions for their healthy development, mental and physical, Australasia hoped to build up two new British nations in the antipodes,

¹ The process of selection was fairly strict. The unfortunate London barber whose occasional duty it is to scrape my chin applied for an assisted passage to Australia in 1912, but was rejected on the ground that he had a varicose vein, a malady almost as common among barbers as a talkative tongue.

An emigration agent who recommended persons of bad character as suitable emigrants was imprisoned about the same time for obtaining money (as commission) by false pretences from one of the agents-general (London *Truth*, 28th February 1912).

better than the old British nation in Europe, because built of more carefully selected materials and reared under more favourable conditions.¹

This second principle postulated the rather large assumption to which every Briton, but not every European, would have given ready approval, that the best type of mankind was the British ; while it proceeded to declare what every European, if not every Briton, would admit, that even that type could be improved.

The full working of this second principle in all its bearings was not indeed grasped at first, even in Australasia, and the principle itself was not often stated in its entirety. It was slowly arrived at rather than definitely postulated ; it was a gradual development, not an intuitive instinct.

The theory of selection and exclusion may have been perfect, the principle of using only the best materials thoroughly justified as a means of building a new nation.² But every theory and every principle must be tested by its practical results before it is approved. And a very remarkable consequence or accompaniment of this theory soon called for serious inquiry and comment in Australia.

A young nation is nothing if it is not virile. Economic pressure may bring down the birth-rate in older and more crowded countries, but in a young community and an empty land there is no such check on reproduction. Large families were the rule in the early American colonies of Britain³ and the old Dutch colonies in South Africa.⁴ They had been the rule in early Australia,

**The Falling
Birth-rate.**

¹ See, for instance, a speech made by Sir George Grey in 1879, in which he remarked that ' we shall succeed in laying here the foundations of a race which shall be in every respect a monument to those who have striven to build it.'

² Massachusetts had applied the same principle with success, to judge by the stalwart breed of New England. The Puritans determined to take ' only the best ' with them to America in 1629 (vol. i. bk. ii. ch. ii.).

³ Vol. i. bk. ii. ch. ii. But infantile mortality was also high.

⁴ Vol. vi. bk. xxiii. ch. iv.

when its white inhabitants were selected indeed, and selected by good judges—but judges of criminals, not of the respectable freemen of Britain. Large families had likewise been the rule among the first two generations of free settlers in the antipodes. But in the third generation, towards the close of the nineteenth century, a sudden and alarming drop occurred in the birth-rate of the Australian colonies.¹

Until the year 1880 the birth-rate was relatively high. Between 1880 and 1889 it fell very slightly, but on the whole it remained nearly level. In 1889, however, there was a sudden fall; and this fall continued in subsequent years. Between 1890 and 1900 the crude birth-rate in New South Wales fell 20·8 per cent.

No obvious statistical reason could be adduced for this sudden and alarming change. The proportions of the sexes had not substantially changed. The marriage-rate, so far from declining, had increased.² No continuously effective economic cause, no great drought or depression of trade, could be assigned.

There was no evidence to show that the Australian climate, or conditions of life, had a sterilising effect on men and women; ³ on the contrary, medical evidence showed that the white natives of Australia were more fecund than white immigrants. It also showed that when both partners to a

¹ See the *Report and Evidence of the Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birth-rate* (1904). The first volume alone was circulated; the second, of which only a dozen copies were printed, was suppressed. But the first is bad enough.

See also *Report on Secret Drugs, Cures, and Foods* (1907), and Beale's *Racial Decay*, an exaggerated and alarmist volume. Coghlan's *Essay on the Decline of the Birth-rate* is more moderate, as is also a paper read before the Australian Mutual Provident Society in 1904.

² The divorce-rate in Australia was also high, a fact which was ascribed to the large number of hasty marriages. The proportion of marriages legally dissolved to the marriages solemnised was 94 per 10,000, as compared with 11 per 10,000 in the United Kingdom, and 612 per 10,000 in the United States.

³ I have seen statements to this effect by one or two Australian writers. But they were not supported by evidence, and I do not think they have ever been endorsed by any responsible authority.

marriage were antipodean-born there was more chance of offspring than when only one was antipodean-born ; while in the latter case again there was less barrenness than when both husband and wife were immigrants.

It was true that the average age at which women married was later, and that their active period of child-bearing was thus diminished ; but this fact had little bearing on the declining birth-rate, for it was discovered that the decline in fertility began with the younger women and proceeded to the elder. And the birth-rate had declined in each age-group in turn, until all alike were affected.

In some classes of life, indeed, the birth-rate had not fallen. In agricultural families, where the children had a direct value in farm work at an early age, the average number of offspring to each marriage was six or more. Among the industrial classes, where the economic value of children was rather less, the average offspring were somewhat fewer ; the average offspring here were five. But among the professional and trading classes it was low, not more than two or three children being born on an average to each marriage.

No apparent decline could be discovered in the physique of the women or the stamina of the men. Sexual diseases, the terrible price man pays for illicit and lustful love, were not more prevalent, and certainly not more severe, in Australia than elsewhere.

It therefore became an irresistible conclusion that the causes of this decline in the birth-rate were entirely within the control of the people. Men would not face the risks of supporting a large family ; women would not face the risks and pains of child-birth.

**Causes of
the Fall.**

A large, indeed an overwhelming, mass of medical evidence supported this irresistible but shameful conclusion. The practice of prevention, usually by artificial and often by filthy and revolting means, was common among all classes. Un-natural vice was rare, but the manufacture and importation

of preventives was common. The demand for such preventives was steady ; and, thanks largely to the advertisements of such goods in the newspapers and magazines, it was enormously increasing.

If the direct preventive failed, induced miscarriage was often resorted to, notwithstanding its danger to the unwilling mother. A large number of professional abortionists found profitable employment at their murderous trade, and these were seldom if ever interfered with by the authorities.

Ignorance of the consequences might have been pleaded by many of those who thus outraged nature ; but the doctors saw that the continual use of preventives gave rise to nervous diseases and even to insanity ; while the practice of inducing miscarriages and abortion had its inevitable consequence in increasing the diseases of women, and frequently rendered them sterile for life.

Nor was this all. Sometimes the wretched offspring of unwilling parents was born ; but here it was no welcome messenger from heaven, its helpless cry awoke no answering chord in its unnatural mother's breast. The fierce joy of servitude to her children had given place to the desire to be rid of an incumbrance ; a nursing home was requisitioned, the unwanted infant was neglected by its mercenary nurse, and too frequently the little life that might have helped to build a mighty nation faded, flickered, and vanished from the earth.

Or there were other and even darker methods. The number of still-born children was so large that suspicion was aroused ; and the fact that these unfortunates, doomed to death before ever they had lived, could be buried without a medical certificate was a strong presumptive proof that steps had been taken that they should not live. There were many who made it their business to bury these children without enquiry ; and evidence was given that people ' would bring a child wrapped in a brown paper parcel, or leave it in a cigar-box

or a stable ; it would be left on the shelf, and be buried perhaps a week or a fortnight later, three or more in the same coffin.' ¹

These unpalatable facts, which could not be denied, threw an ugly light on the policy of selection and exclusion, the attempt to check the struggle for existence, and the attainment of the gospel of comfort and happiness. The policy of exclusion had not only excluded adult immigrants from Australia ; it had excluded children from being born. The check on the struggle for existence had checked the unborn infant on its unseen journey from love to being ; it, too, had struggled to live, and failed. And the gospel of comfort and happiness had been translated by too many to mean sheer selfishness and avoidance of parenthood. Perhaps both parties to the contract of sterility lost more than they gained by burking the central fact of life ; but whatever joys or sorrows her people had missed, the Australian nation had lost a quarter of a million births in the previous quarter-century, and was still losing every year.

Nor were some, at least, of the leaders of opinion in the antipodes unaware of the ultimate direction of the primrose path of parental ease. Old men may advise and direct a nation, they may save it from the mistakes of younger blood ; but it is the younger blood that a people needs to renew its strength. The house that knows no patter of little feet along its corridors, or hears no shrill treble of children's voices, must pass in time to others ; the nation that repudiates its offspring is likewise surely doomed.

The able and fearless statistician of New South Wales,² who first drew public attention to the spreading evil of which every private citizen was aware, pointed out that the maintenance of the White Australia policy was contingent on

¹ Evidence given before the Commission of 1904.

² T. A. Coghlan, afterwards Agent-General in London. The fact that all official statistics in Australia are quite exceptionally valuable and trustworthy is in no small part due to his labours and example.

the maintenance of a high birth-rate; if the British would not or could not populate the continent they had claimed, another race would seize it from them.

Others saw the grave social troubles which must arise in the future if the decline was not checked. The practice of prevention was relatively greatest among the wealthier classes, for it is a marked and evil peculiarity that social diseases of this kind attack first those who have prospered; and the inevitable consequence of restricted parentage allied with wealth is that in two or three generations riches accumulate in few hands, and those few too often degenerate and unworthy, to the peril of the state and society.

But secret social evils are the most difficult to cure, since they go far deeper than mere political discontents. They are often beyond the power of the greatest statesman, and on the petty stage of Australian provincial parliaments they were certainly beyond the power of politicians dependent on a majority vote.¹ The clergy of all denominations, who saw and deplored the evil, and ascribed it to a lack of moral fibre among the people, were too respectful of the traditional reticences of English public life to denounce it from their pulpits. The press, which had in some sort aspired to usurp the place once held by the pulpit in English communities, was likewise dumb; it profited from the advertisements of preventives and the procurers of abortion, and silence was here the price of shame. The medical profession, too, which had the most cogent reasons for condemning a practice of which it alone could realise to the full the disastrous consequences, was divided. Reputable practitioners set their faces sternly against prevention, but they could only refuse

¹ In England, where the same evil had shown itself, no politician so much as hinted at the indelicate subject. In the United States, where the evil was rampant, only Theodore Roosevelt had the courage to denounce it. But in the United States prevention and its filthy accompaniments was actually raised to a cult, and exploited under the guise of a secret religion. I have myself seen some of the disgusting literature of this movement, which is almost incredibly revolting.

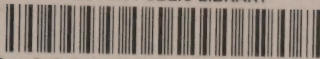
to assist, they could not stop the abuse; and there were degraded doctors, the disgrace of their noble calling, who made a horrible profit from abortion, and lived by preventing others from living.

A slight but hardly perceptible improvement was noticed after the report of the Royal Commission was published; but Royal Commissions are too often themselves abortive to cure abortion in others. A fall was certainly seen in the rather high figures of infantile mortality, from 103·61 per 1000 in 1901 to 71·56 in 1909. Some few lives were thereby saved; but the birth-rate itself remained at the low level which had now become normal, and that was in itself sufficient evidence that the social disease was uncured.

And on that sterile rock the otherwise so fruitful white democracy of Australia, which had destroyed its black predecessors on the continent in the nineteenth century, seemed likely to destroy itself in the twentieth.

END OF VOLUME THE FIFTH

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